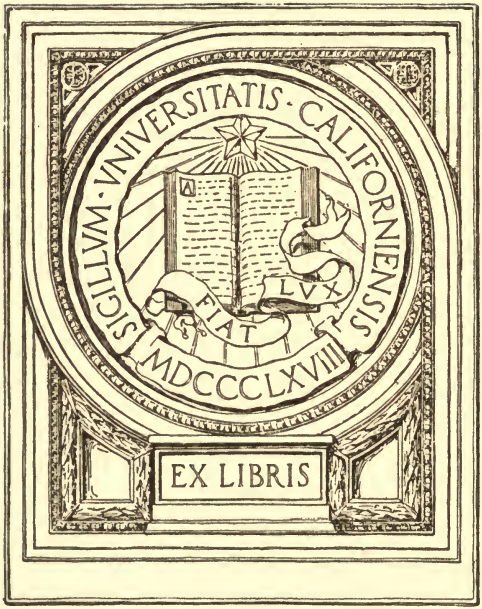
WIND AND WEATHER

L. H. BAILEY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WIND AND WEATHER

THE BACKGROUND BOOKS

By L. H. Bailey

Under this general title Mr. Bailey will prepare from time to time, in small volumes, his personal estimates and expressions on the important and interesting subjects to which he has devoted his life.

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

WIND AND WEATHER

BY

L. H. BAILEY

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Contents

	PAGE
Wind and Weather	1
Cybele	2
Release	3
Cosmos	4
Rainy Day	5
Night-Rain	6
Day-Dust	8
Winter	10
Snow-Storm	12
January	13
Dead of Winter	14
Tropic	15
Away	16
The Wind	17
Night-Wind	20
"Wind Blows"	22
Symphony	25
Trade-Wind	26
The Great Voice	28
The Upper Wind	30
Ye Winds of the Sea	32
There	34
Purple River	35
The Vagrant Rivers	38

343511

PAGE

Spring Rivulet 41
Between 45
Starlight 46
Star 47
Riches 48
Requiem 49
Enough 50
Cascadin 51
Bell Buoy 52
At Midnight 54
Deeps 56
Sea-Grave 58
Miracle 59
Columbine 60
Campanula 64
Apple-Blow 66
Mighty Leaf 68
White Clover 70
Apple-Year 71
Penthorum 74
Prayer 76
Hermit Thrush 77
Yellow-Bird 78
Horizon 80
Wishful Traveller 81
The Great High-Roads 82
One 85
Marvel 86
Desert 88
Spare Me One Swamp 90
Mt. Tom 92

PAGE

The Summons 95
Yonder 98
Mother Mud 100
Hands 102
The Signs of Life 104
Farmer 106
Farmer's Challenge 107
I Plow 108
Plow-Boy 110
Here 111
Young Farmer 112
John 114
Tile Drain 116
Child's Realm 119
Country School 120
Country Church 122
Utility 124
Goods 126
Sower and Seer 127
It Rained 130
Vesper 132
Daybreak 133
Hill-Paths 136
The Farthermost Hills 138
My Purple Hills 139
Beacon 140
Out 141
New Moon 142
Spirit 144
Rest 146
Skein 147

PAGE
She Sang 148
'Cello 150
Pause 152
Poet 153
Cover 154
Strength 156
Three 157
Him 158
Two 159
Naught 160
Anchorage 162
Which 165
Weft 166
Fellowship 167
Brotherhood 168
I Am 170
Process 172
Wreck 174
December 176
The Woe-Winged Birds 179
Thunder-Call 180
Discovery 184
He 186
Prophet 187
Both 188
Majesty 189
Otherwhere 190
Journey 192
Back 194
The Little Ships and the Big Ships 196
Five 198

PAGE

Hive 199
Nay 200
The Rounds 202
Faith and Trust 204
Resurrection 205
This Greenwood Tree 206
My Great Oak Tree 208
My Broken Tree 210
Undertone 212
Annette 214

Index 215

WIND AND WEATHER

WIND AND WEATHER

Passengers on the cosmic sea
We know not whence nor whither,—
'Tis happiness enough to be
Complete with wind and weather.

CYBELE

Spirit of the raw and gravid earth
Whenceforth all things receive breed and birth,
From palaces and cities great
From pomp and pageantry and state
  Back I come with empty hands
  Back unto your naked lands.

RELEASE

One day
I went
To the fields to rest.

The sun
Hung low
On the rim of the West.

A sparrow
Chirped
As it dropped to its nest.

And my soul
Had found
The boon of its quest.

COSMOS

The rain came down
In field and town;
The rain poured down
From houses brown.

I was afoot when the rain came down.

RAINY DAY

THE soft gray rain comes slowly down
Settling the mists on marshes brown
Closing the world on wood and hill
Drifting the fog down vale and rill;
The weed-stalks bend with pearly drops
The grasses hang their misty tops
The clean leaves drip with tiny spheres
And fence-rails run with pleasant tears.

Away with care! I walk to-day
In meadows wet and forests gray;—
'Neath heavy trees with branches low
'Cross splashy fields where wild things grow
Past shining reeds in knee-deep tarns
By soaking crops and black-wet barns
On mossy stones in dripping nooks,
Up rainy pools and brimming brooks
With waterfalls and cascadills
Fed by the new-born grassy rills;—
And then circle home across the lots
Thro' all the soft and watery spots.

Away with care! I walk to-day
In meadows wet and forests gray.

NIGHT-RAIN

THE heavy rain fell all the night long
Through countless trees in the forest throng
Steady and loud in a wild gray song.

I heard the drip of my cabin eaves
And boundless blur that the rainstorm weaves
On stems and blades of a million leaves.

I listened to hear the heavy roar
Where swollen streams in their channels tore
Far out in darks of the forest floor.

And all else was still; nor life nor sound
Nor humankind in the whole world round
Gave note or stir in the depths profound.

Torrent and drench lay the long night pall
With billow and mist and fountain-call
With the rain and rain and runnel-fall.

And sweet it was in the pouring deep
To lie awake in my vigil-keep
Nor lose one note in the blanks of sleep.

And good it was in my slender shell
While the nearing skies about me fell
To be wet and free and weather-well.

I thought of birds asleep on their spray
Of the burrows deep where wild things lay
And was glad for crops on farms away.

A balm there was in the falling rain
To the beast and bird in wood and plain
To ease the fields of their drought and pain.

Then the morning woke, and clear and wide
The sun shone out on the countryside
And the hills and woods were million-dyed.

My cabin smoke mounted straight in air
Soft rainy pools settled ev'rywhere
The trees were clean and the farms were fair.

Oh birds in song, and the meadows through
Oh broken clouds in the fields of blue
The rain and the night make all things new.

DAY-DUST

Over the dust-deep roads I go
Over the roads where dry airs blow
Out to the hills that parch and burn
To meadows sere that scorch and yearn,—
Over the grinding roads I go.

The trees stand stiff in heavy dust
The streams are turned to silt;
With ashes thick the ways are crust
And weeds in cobwebs wilt;
The pastures dumb in cinders stay
The dingy cattle laze,
The landscapes blear are sultry gray
The sun swims deep in haze.

I feel the dust upon my face
It settles in my hair,
It rises with each onward pace
And covers all I wear,
It enters ev'ry willing place
And leaves its fragrance there.
I feel the grit upon my hands
Its texture on my dress,—

In strong clean dust I tramp my rands
  In dust of heat and stress,
It joins me to my arid sands
  As on my way I press.

In dust and rain the fields are mine
  In snow and sleet and hail;
I must not miss one mood or line
  One drought or freshet fail.
I want some contact with the earth
  Some touch direct and free
That makes me quick to death and birth
  And ties all things with me.

  Away to dust-drift fields I go
  Away to fields where hot suns glow
  Out to the heats that shimm'r and bake
  To stubbles glare that crack and break,—
    Away to smoking fields I go.

WINTER

Snow to my knees, shivering blasts
Piercing slivers of ice and sleet
Creaking trees all rigid and gaunt
Clouds that drive in the wind-wild vasts
Houses clean gone from field and street
Footways buried to stall and haunt,—
Ah winter, old winter, so braggartly hurled,
Unfrightened we stand on the top of your world,
Unprisoned and free as the birds that are whirled
When blizzards are loosed and the tempests are sent—
Unhurried we wait till your furies are spent.

Wide is the world of the drifting snow
Wide over the waste the white rifts go
Travelling on with a ceaseless flow
Out to the voids we never shall know.

Frog insect and snake lie fast lie tight
Hidden and snug in pocketed deeps,
But we are alive come green come white
The year is ours while the 'neath-world sleeps,—

Ours with rabbit's track and mouse's trail
With grasses frayed and rough trees snow-limbed
Fence-drift's clean curl and the seed-pod's sail
Stumps white-turbanned and deep creeks ice-rimmed.

Crunch and crunch through the white snapping crust
With frigid bush and summer's dead stalk
Where earth lies deep and ice-piles are thrust,
The trackless ways are the ways we walk,—

Walk out and out with the swirling snow
On to the realms of bluster and blow
Where ghosts of the years of long ago
Shriek thro' the hills to caverns below.

Stript to the bone is the wind-worn year
Cover and mask and ornament gone—
Clear as days to the sight of the seer
We understand when the veil is withdrawn.

Come on, ye storms! Together we reach
Past and outpast the timid alarms—
This is our day; and over the breach
We go the way of the warmthless farms.

SNOW-STORM

With windy haste and wild halloo the sheeting
snow comes down
And drives itself through bush and swale and
leagues of stubble brown.

Blessings on the waiting fields when the sheeting
snow comes down.

JANUARY

ENDLESSLY stretches the snow
The sun stays low
The pinched airs flow
Through shivering tree-heads bare,
Scant windy birds are in air
And the lead-blue film is everywhere;
The deeps of the woods lie near
The footless ways are clear
Sconced in the sleep of the year.

Glisten and freeze on field and pond
The lines are unbond!—
And the gamut is stript to the ends and beyond.

It is now that the four winds meet
'Tis now that the world's in my feet,—
Call of my heart, be fleet be fleet!

Io
The snow!

DEAD OF WINTER

Hoary and old
Covered and cold
The white zone sleeps
Sturdily sleeps
Gathering strength
For the issue at length
On a startled day
When the slumber gives way.

But the dozing palms
In the tropic calms
Never know
As they grow
What it is to awake
With a startle and shake.

It is worth while to sleep
When the sleeping is deep.

TROPIC

How tired the tropic seemed
As tired as one who slept and dreamed!
Half alive through the weary-dry
The ravelled leaves hung low and high,
Unkempt unclothed the jungle lay.
And then there breathed a witching day
When old growths went and new growths came
Like a verdant brooding flame,
And pulses crept;
The bamboos melted at their tips
And new tastes mounted to the lips,
New rain-myths swept
The tropic clean
Joined sky and earth and all between,
And senses roused in bush and lakes
As one so gently gently wakes
He had not known he slept.

AWAY

My soul and I went away together
Went away in wood and windy weather
And nobody asked us why or whether;
And thus it came that we slipt the tether
That had latched us in to half-holds nether.

THE WIND

The wind, the wind,
The mourning wind!
It comes and grieves
About my eaves
It knocks and groans
It cries and moans,
And the chilly moon
Rides aloft at noon
In the mourning, mourning wind.

The wind, the wind,
The raining wind!
Thro' dripping sprays
And grass-wet ways
It winds and lifts
It weaves and shifts,
And I walk apart
Where the storm-rills start
In the raining, raining wind.

The wind, the wind,
The summer wind!

In idle ease
Thro' weeds and trees
It wafts and woos
It soothes and sues,
  And I fall asleep
  Where the grass is deep
    In the summer, summer wind.

The wind, the wind,
  The thieving wind!
It whisks and starts
It scuds and darts
It whips the vanes
It shakes the panes,
  And the apples fall
  Where the weeds are tall
    In the thieving, thieving wind.

The wind, the wind,
  The winter wind!
It sweeps and soars
It howls and roars
It drives the snow
It piles the floe,
  And the drifting sky
  Runs gainless and dry
    In the winter, winter wind.

The wind, the wind,
  The midnight wind!
When night hours wane
And star-hosts reign
In monotone
It moves alone,
  And nobody knows
  Where the dead world blows
    In the midnight, midnight wind.

NIGHT–WIND

I LIE adrift in the night-wind
That blows the reeds in my eaves,
Sounding the strings of the tree-tops
Sifting its sands thro' the leaves,
Bringing the tones of the hill-crests
Down thro' the hollows of dark,
Taking me off with its music
Bearing me on in its bark.

Oh mystic flow of the night-wind
Afloat in the tops of trees
Fleeing the touch of the twilights
Roaming the crests of the seas,
Stealing thro' glooms of the woodlands
Searching the graves of the lost
Stalking in houses deserted
Where homeless spirits have crossed,
Passing the desolate uplands
Over old forests of sighs
Up to the tops of the mountains
Off to the vasts of the skies,
Out in the crystalline heavens
Under the chill of the moon

Lifting and weaving the cloudlands
Till star-lights topple and swoon,
Far to the uttermost spaces
Where suns and planets are sped
Bearing the souls of the living
Out to the bourne of the dead,—
Oh timeless drift of the night-wind
With earth and stars in thy keep
Flowing and roaming forever—
I lie in thy tides,—and sleep.

"WIND BLOWS"

THERE was a game the children played
In country districts where they stayed,
As quiet as the rains and snows
And native as the grass that grows.
"Wind blows" they called this simple game,
And all the fields is in the name.

Billow and roll
Bellow and toll
'Bout tree and knoll
The round winds bowl
  Roundly and roundly rolling;
And fast or slow
Or high or low
We halt and go
When round winds blow
  Like bells and bells a-tolling.

Wild dry days with all things flowing
Flight of leaves down bare fields ranging
Clouds adrift and white winds blowing
Straight and steady and unchanging
Dust-filled highways ever going

And the tree-tops onward bending,—
Sail and gallop surely knowing
Where our journeys will be trending.

Under and over and under
Over and under and over
Tearing the orchards asunder
Lodging the wheat and the clover
Plunging the woods with its thunder
Headlong and change as a drover,—
Where we are going I wonder—
The wind and wind is a rover.

The clear summer breeze
Lies deep in the trees
With hum of the bees;
We wander away
In the blue June day
With the winds to play;
And we hardly know
What way we should go
So softly they flow.

So that was the way
Did the children play.
They stept from the door
With the fields before
And followed the course
As they felt the force

Of winds as they pass
In gardens and grass,
Like a thistle seed
From its prison freed.
And tiring to roam
They turned themselves home.

Oh children, children, many a day
I've followed the winds in fields away,
To birds a-wing and the river-flows
To meadows free where the wild phlox grows,
When woods and shores and life were the aim
And texts and schools were only a name.

And I never will be so old and gray
But I'll track the winds in their wander-way.

SYMPHONY

THE leaves upon the aspen-tree
They poppled in the breeze
And held the drifting harmony
Of music in the trees.

TRADE-WIND

Breath of the seas, of the four-way seas
Balm of the tropic isles
Wafture of ease, of the month-long ease
Roll of the magic miles,—
The trade-wind blows from the end of days
Soft and silken and rare
Curling the crests of the blue-white sprays
Playing my sleeves and hair.

Blow, ye trade-wind, blow,
The ship is swinging low;
Blow, ye trade-wind, blow,
Around the world we go.

Dreams of the mains, of the blue-thin mains
Sighted from tar-patched sails
Call of the lanes, of the long salt lanes
Flavor of old sea-tales,—
Down the tropic and far on the Line
Safe past the doldrum calms
The trades bring word of the rover brine
And reefs thin-ringed with palms.

Blow, ye trade-wind, blow,
With music soft and low;
Blow, ye trade-wind, blow,
Over the earth we go.

Athwart the lines the world-winds roam—
The freighted ships are sailing home.

THE GREAT VOICE

THE greatest voice in nature
Is the blowing of the wind.
It holds its mood and gature
In the palm-tree and the lind.
All other sounds are local
And with time or place are twinned,
But the wind is ev'r vocal
From Columbia unto Ind.

It moves in easy stages
On the long and grassy leas,
And leisurely engages
With the gardens and the trees;
And it shouts soundless pæans
In the far and vast degrees,
A spirit of old eons
Weeping lone on rolling seas.

I hear its high rehearsal
When the midnight epochs run,
With message universal
And the world in unison;

I hear it in the morning
Bringing strength of storm and sun,
Of nerveless doubt forewarning
And my day of work is won.

Rolls the rhythm instrumental
Bugle-blown and violined,
Strikes the stave accidental
Timbrel-toned and siren-spinned,—
Mortal hears and makes them his
When the soul is disciplined.
All the world a poem is
To them that hearken to the wind.

THE UPPER WIND

Far off on the headland meadow-heights we went one autumn day
The wind was driving mightily in a sky cloud-torn and gray
The birds to covert were driven in, old trees shrieked loud and high
The dead year's crop of shattered leaves in the gales went whipping by
And broken smokes of chimney-stacks in the rounding valleys lay,—
Oh God, thy wind is good!

Down in the ripping canyon-cuts and up on the grimy wall
Deep in mud of the ragged brooks, through fleck of the water-brawl
Sheer on crests of the precipice where the worlds stretch out below
And silver threads of flattened streams in the mottled marshes go
Away on the tops with jump and run, and on with shout and call,—
Oh God, thy wind is good!

Then calm in a nook on the leeward scarf of a bluff-head sheer
We rode in leash of strident gales in the bursting atmosphere
The leaves sucked out of the stilled recess and off in space were hurled
And fell in droves down the nether lanes like cloths of gold unfurled
And rolling ranks of the wind-bare trees arose in tier on tier,—
Oh God, thy wind is good!

Out and away to the farther skies, to clouds that bound the ken
Down on the empty distances and back to the ends again
The great old winds of the meadow-tops blow through me clean and clean
And drive me down the firmament in the rifts of gray and green
And through the tinctured sunsets and flaming fields of oxygen,—
Oh God, thy wind is good!

YE WINDS OF THE SEA

Ye gray winds of the ocean, where have ye been
Which way have ye come and where did ye begin?
What wastes have ye crossed in the uttermost miles
What hostelless strands on the far-lying isles?
What deeps have ye touched that no mortal hath seen
And news of the leagues that lie pathless between?

Ah, lifeless and deathless ye bring me no word
Of the signs ye have seen, of dooms ye have heard
And onward ye go to the ends beyond ken
And never return to the starting again,
And no bounds do ye set, no homes do ye keep
No shores for a refuge, no pardon of sleep
But ever and ever past line and degree
Ye roam and ye roam on the favorless sea.

No balm and no solace, no rescue or rest
No heed and no ward of behoof or behest
Detached and alone ye go whither ye will
And when eons have passed ye wander on still.

But no hurt of the heart, no fret of the head
Are borne on the winds when the worker is dead
And my soul goeth out with the winds of the sea
The winds that are timeless and placeless and free.

THERE

THERE is a ship on southern seas
  That sails from isle to isle,
Its sheets are bellying in the breeze
  On many-a crystal mile.

And I have sailed upon that ship
  Where dreaming strands advance,
And I have watched its gunwales dip
  Along the free expanse.

There is a ship on southern seas—
  I wonder where to-day
And who it is that feels the breeze
  Upon its crystal way.

PURPLE RIVER

THE purple river runneth on
'Twixt banks of earth and heaven;
All wrinkle-starred its waters are
By sheeting sunlights given;
All dark and deep its ripples fall
By raven night-winds riven.

I lie along the languid banks
The banks that bear their burthen;
A little leaf lies in the grass
The grass is cool and earthen;
A spider spins its circles deft
The circles wind and girthen.

A clover braids a globèd head
A wild bee tracks the treasure;
A swallow sweeps the waters low
A sparrow pours his measure,
And far and free a filmy cloud
Wreathes deep within the azure.

And ripple ripple on the shore
The waves wash up the gravel,

The while the dry-winged dragon-flies
  Their flimsy flights enravel
And on the pools the water-bugs
  In ceaseless circuits travel.

The ripples and the dragon-flies
  The sparrow and the spider
The swallow and the swimming cloud
  The river and its rider—
They settle in my swinging sense
  That deeper grows and wider.

And ever on the river runs
  With winds and weeds and weather,
And ever stay the streaming sticks
  That turn and twine together;
And sunken worlds unending weave
  Of sky and hill and heather.

A shingle sails along the surf
  From some far cottage-cover,
The rotting wracks of distant farms
  In hollow eddies hover,
And now and then there passes on
  A note from lass to lover.

And 'twixt the surges ceaselessly
  A straight and stringing streamer
Points on the way the waters go

To shores and seas supremer;
And on the river rides the foam
And on the bank the dreamer.

For still I sit all silently
And mark the water's motion,
I watch the spinning spirals swirl
And mix their magic potion;
I wonder how the mazes merge
From highland hill to ocean.

The sun and swooning moon swim by
And shine in surge and shallow,
The soft slow winds exhale from earth
And breathe in bray and sallow;
The torrent ties them all in one
And night falls on the fallow.

And ever on the breezes blow
And ever runs the river,
Forever wind the bending weeds
Alway the sheer leaves shiver,
The whiles the wonder-web of life
Is woven by the Weaver.

THE VAGRANT RIVERS

From mountain-foot to ocean-breast the vacant rivers run
Forsaken through a teeming land with work that's never done
Nor ever sloop or punt or yawl upon their billow rides
The while the waiting produce rots upon their bursting sides.

No fishing folk upon their shores, no little mills to turn,
No clustered homes along their banks, no altar-fires to burn,
All fruitless in a fruitful land they roll out to the sea
Nor bear one jot of human love to mark their destiny.

Ere we upon these western lands had placed an eager shoe
Along these streams the Indian had pushed his frail canoe,

Across divides his trails he led and down new rivers went
And drew a web of tribe and search within the continent.

Raw nature cast upon the drift her freight of ice and scrog
And scattered far her pregnant seeds on raft of root and log,
And migrant birds and footed beasts led out their leading-lines
Along the marge of stream and lake in palm and frigid pines.

Yet we yet we the conquer-men, the men of will and weal
Have bound our hands and lashed our feet with bands of belted steel,
And wantonly on cleansing floods our filth and draff we pour
Nor fish nor beast can habit where our sins lie 'long the shore.

But nature is our background still, and wide as winds that blow
Must stead ourselves by wood and wold and by the river-flow
Nor lose one whit of vantage free that lies in crop and rill
Or girds us with great mastery to ev'ry field we till.

From sanded Gulf to green Quebec the wastrel rivers run
By farm and fane they hurry on, nor burden borne or won,
Nor fishing folk along their shores, nor little mills to turn,
Nor clustered homes upon their banks, nor altar-fires to burn.

SPRING RIVULET

When the March suns come
And meadows are free
And the waters start
A-way to the sea,
Far back in the fields
When the keen winds blow
I follow a rill
From a bank of snow.
There the last drift lies
In a fence-row hedge
And an inch-wide thread
Drops out of its edge;
And the day-old pools
Ice-rimmed on the grass
Seep into the stream
As its waters pass.
Sparkle and sparkle the streamlets roam,
Grasses and twigs are pointing from home.

Oh winter, my winter, you have left me again;
The snow's gone from the hillsides and meadows are bare,

The orchards are vacant and all stark is the glen,
The highways are drying and the woodlands are spare.

Through the pastures high
Now free of their snows
On gray matted sod
The rivulet grows,—
Dips under a root
Falls over a stone
Slips under a bank
With a muffled tone,
Shines out in the sun
Then sweeps round a knoll
And spreads clear and still
In a weed-edged bowl.
It drains the mud slews
In the fields of wheat
And lays down the silt
Where the currents meet.
Bubble and bubble tumbles the foam,
Grasses and twigs will find a new home.

Oh robin, my robin, you are with me again;
The sap's in the maple and the wood-twigs are bright,
The fence-rows are waking and afield are the men,
The March-winds are roaming and the willows are white.

It follows a groove
Turned out by the share

Then digs to the rocks
And washes them bare;
Then into high swales
'Mongst the cat-tail reeds
Where the bushes dip
With burden of weeds;
And over a cliff
It splinters and falls
And dashes its spray
On the frost-work walls;
Then on to the flats
Where the frogs will peep
And the pebbles shine
In its bottoms deep.
Silent and silent under the loam,
Grasses and twigs at last are at home.

Oh willow, my willow, you have come once again;
The sun's on the marshes and the brooksides are green,
The lowlands are warming and astir is the fen,
The red-wing is calling and the marsh-pools are clean.

When the June days come
And the growths have spread
I pick out the course
Of the dry stream bed;—
A pathway of stones
A dip in the land
A basin of silt

A handful of sand;
A wisp of dry grass
Hung over the brim
A log-jam of sticks
Where the stream was slim;—
Its life was as full
For a week or day
As rivers that roll
To the sea alway.
Babble and babble next spring 'twill roam,
Grasses and twigs will again sail home.

BETWEEN

To eastward from my mountain height
The day was coming on;
To westward lay the blacks of night
On-marching from the sun.

STARLIGHT

I SLEPT night long in the starlight
Under the calm great sky
The cool of the depths was about me
As the silent hours went by.

The day had been one of dejection
It had followed me on to my rest
And I took me out to the starlights
When the day went down in the west.

Often I woke from my slumber
And the silent stars were there
In passionless steadfast legions
On guard in the welkin bare.

Under the gleam of the star-shine
Motionless long I lay
Knowing at last I had mastered,—
As calm and as silent as they.

STAR

Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are!

If I knew then I should learn
What some man shall yet discern—
What it is that sets us here
Each within his proper sphere
Making plain to contemplate
On the miracles of fate.

But I think that now I see
What your twinkle is to me—
Just a little friendly light
Set against the roof of night
As the trees do stand by day
When I walk upon my way.

Twinkle, twinkle little star
You are not so very far!

RICHES

I LOOKED into the lily-bell to see what lay within,
To find how deep the chalice was, what nectar
pearled therein.

The bottoms of the lily-cups with olden treasure in
Have hung upon the thoroughways wherever I have
been.

REQUIEM

THERE is a place that I know well
It lieth by the sea
And there the faded years do dwell
And roll their billows back to me.

On all the shores of all the seas
These ageless bygones be
A requiem of earth's memories
And ev'ry wave a century.

I walk alone on timeless shores
Beside the swelling sea
And let the surge from far Azores
Bring in its ancient melody.

ENOUGH

ONCE upon a Sunday
On the Bay of Fundy
I heard the billows roar
Against a naked shore;
There was no roof or steeple
There were no streets or people
So I let the breakers roar
For I wanted nothing more.

CASCADIN

I KNOW a little limpid lin
Within a woodland green
That drops its fragile waters in
A basin cool and clean.

A hemlock bough hangs on the rim
Quaint mosses hem it in
Some tender tufts of grasses slim
Repeat themselves within.

Two feet the beamy waters drop
With cadence crystalline
A tiny rill bears from the top
An echo fine and thin.

No name the shelvèd linnel has
With which it may begin
In storm it falls as sweetly as
It falls when calms are in.

I know a little limpid lin
Within a forest grot—
In grosser lands where I have been
I mind the gurgy spot.

BELL BUOY

I SIT on the waves
I toss in the storm
And the salt spray laves
My skeleton form;
And all the day long
With a reckless ease
I roll my ding-dong
On the ear o' the breeze.

And the mermaids hear
In the ebb and flow
And they shake with fear
In their beds below;
And the sea-sprite goes
In haste and away
As I ring my woes
At the break of day.

And still thro' the night
When the sea-winds moan
And the phosph'rous light
Mocks the shim'ring moon,

I toll out the time
In monotone knell,
In dull hollow rhyme
Like a voice from hell.

So I sit and swing
Where the billows be
A phantom-like thing—
A ghost of the sea;
And out from my bars
Floats the doleful tone
Out under the stars
Of a soul alone.

AT MIDNIGHT

At midnight on the shoaling sands
I stayed while the tide came in,
I breathed the wind of rolling bands
And the salt that lay within.

No mortal stood on any shore
No wraith of a kith or kind,—
The waves rolled in, and many more
Followed on and on behind.

The clouds ribbed on in striding bars
To the dull horizon's rim,—
No moon shone out, nor guiding stars
On the world unmarked and dim.

No night-bird called, no panging cry
From the landward side was hurled,
But silence held the hanging sky
That weighed on the wrinkled world.

Across the sea the gleaming light
Of a million souls shone wan

And moved away in dreaming night
  As an army marching on.

I alone of the legion souls
  Enfleshed since the world began
Stood where the shore-line region rolls
  And gazed on the sea-floor span.

At midnight on a thousand shores
  I beheld the flood-tides run,—
All strifeless lay my prows and oars
  For the night and I were one.

DEEPS

Down under the world a citadel lies
  Down deep in the depths of the sea
Unseen are its walls by humankind eyes
  Deep down where the nether-slimes be.

And monstrous forms through those corridors creep
  Down down to the bottoms of time
And the ways are dark and reaches are deep
  In valleys of cold and of rime.

High up in their skies strange monitors swim
  Up up till the light of the sun
Some regioning where old twilights are dim
  And some where swift day-ripples run.

For never the sun or planets have seen
  The ultimate gulfs of the sea,
Or ever the moon the spaces between
  Those cavernous vasts and the free.

Great peoples may rise and empires may go
  The mountains wear down and be gone

And yet may oceans lie vastly below
As they lay at th' creatureless dawn.

And far in silence of time and of night
The dead of the ages shall lie
Unmoved where they fall and stilled of affright
While epochless eons pass by.

Down under the world a labyrinth lies
Down under the darkness and ooze,
And never the deeps shall bare to the skies
Till th' Maker of Eons shall choose.

SEA-GRAVE

All silently the singer sleeps
In the grave-sands by the sea,
All fearlessly the wave-wind weeps
On dunes of the sleepless sea.

All drearily the storm-birds cry
By the sand-whipped whistling sea,
All startlingly the beach-specks fly
At night to the frightless sea.

All ceaselessly the pulsing wave
Rolls the stones in th' froth-edged sea,
And night and day the drifted grave
Lies lone by the soulless sea.

All troublessly the beach-worn wrack
Rests white by the bleaching sea,
But never comes the spirit back
To its corse by th' prayerless sea.

MIRACLE

YESTERDAY the twig was brown and bare;
To-day the glint of green is there
To-morrow will be leaflets spare;
I know no thing so wondrous fair
No miracle so strangely rare.

I wonder what will next be there!

COLUMBINE

COLUMBINE
What doest thou here
Upon this chine
Of rock-cliff sheer?

Above my head
Thou standest there
Without a shred
Of soil to bear
Thy herbage up
Or a cup
To hold a bit
To water it.

And yet
And yet
In bloom beset
And full of green
Straight and serene
Thou call'st the bees and humming-birds
And I but wonder without words.

Columbine
What kith is thine?

Doth the rock burst into bloom
So the bees seek its perfume?
Is there somewhere in its breast
A spirit moving without rest
That doth fabricate
This wall of slate
Into forms so complicate
That but a breath
Would bring death
They are so frail
So thinly frail?
Old alchemy
They say to me
Is dead long years ago;
If that be so
Then is the mystery
But deeper still
And I ponder as I will.

But, Columbine
(Marvel mine
Upon thy chink)
I must think
Thou art alchemist;

No analyst
Can half explain
What doth attain,—
A quickened thing drawn from a stone
With stems and buds and seed-pods grown
Seemly flowers with filaments therein
And pearling tubes with nectar in
Leaflets modelled tenderly
Rainbow hues
Winds and dews
And the spring's transparency
All in sweetest unity.

A wall of rock
A seed
No noise nor strife:
Thou dost unlock
A wonder-lead
And a flush of life
Springs speedily;—
How such things as this may be
Is the miracle
Perpetual,
And I need not marvel any more
At what the earth yet holds in store.

Ah, the wonder that has run
That some sweet alchemy has won—
Kissed together stone and sun!

O Columbine
The world is thine!

CAMPANULA

THERE is a ferny dell I know
Where spiry stalks of harebell grow.
It is a little cool retreat
Of bosky scents and airs complete.
There is a maze of fragile stems
That hang their pods above the hems
Of mossy fountains crystal clear
'Mongst webby threads of gossamere
And filmy tints of green and blue
A-strung in beads of fragrant dew.
A tiny stroke the blue-bell rings
As on its slender cord it swings,
And if you listen long and well
You'll hear the music in the bell.

And often when I've toiled with men
Or passed my day with plans and pen
Or fled afar on starry seas,
I join the camp of moths and bees
And wander by the minty pools
To sedge and fern and campanules.
And then I lie on twig and grass
And watch the slimsy creatures pass,

And find the little folk that dwells
So deep inside the azure bells
I wonder how they come and go.
And as I listen long and low
I catch the cadence of a note
Astir within the petal throat,
I hear a tiny octave played
And slender music, crystal-rayed.

There are two worlds that I know full well—
The world of men and the petal bell.

APPLE-BLOW

It fell
(I know well)
On a day
In the May
When spring was lush
And the thrush
And the thrush
Sang free,
That an apple-tree
To its tense buds drew
The spice of the dew
The slant of the rain
The lilt of the lane
Where fresh meadows run
The pith of the sun
The essence compressed
In wind of the West
The tremor awhir
The fragrance astir
The tang of new fields
The mem'ries of wealds
We knew long ago
The call of the crow

The boast of the frog
In his bursting bog
The mumble of rills
The fetch of far hills
And spaces that lie
In blue of the sky
Beyond the white moon
In heats of the noon,—
Till it burst
Till it burst
Of its leaven dispersed
And the yearn of the pain
That it could not contain.

So it fell
(As I tell)
On a lusting day
In the heart of the May
That an apple-tree sound
Was burst of the sun and the lift of
the ground.

MIGHTY LEAF

A BRAZEN pageant passed up the street
And all the people rushed to see it;
There was bugle blare, and rolling thrums
Of throbbing horns and the booming drums,
Emblazoned heralds, the fanfare's greet,
Resplendent robes, and the measured beat
And mighty roar of a thousand feet
Like victor's march to his conquer-seat.

The pageant passed; and a dead leaf fell
Slowly and slowly and clear and well
A missive 'scaped from a cosmic cell
A tone unloosed from a primal bell
That bore on its way a wonder-spell:—

A wonder-spell of mysteries
Contained in patient leaves of trees
In fungus spoor and spider's brood
And all the living multitude;
A wonder-spell of pictures fine
In ev'ry land where sun doth shine
And long distil the tonic wine
In weaving palm and stolid pine,—

Of dreaming heights
Where sky doth call
Of fragrant nights
When rain doth fall
Of winding roads
Where wind doth blow
And shaded lodes
Where stream doth flow;
A wonder-spell of painless grief
Within each falling silent leaf
That holds all knowledge in its sheaf,—
For if we knew if we knew
Why it came and why it grew
How the living spirit drew
From sky and earth its channels through,
We should know we should know
Why things are so
The meanings of the hidden years
And all the music of the spheres.

A pageant proud rolled its barren swell
While a mighty leaf to the greensward fell.

WHITE CLOVER

A VAGRANT plant to my garden came
And escaped the workman's hoe,
He knew it not by the leaf or name
So he let it stay and grow.

It grew full well in the garden mould
And covered a space yard-wide;
He watched the honey-white heads unfold
And pointed them out with pride.

Many a weed in the garden lot
Were fair as the clover blow
If only its name were all forgot
And 'twere giv'n its chance to grow.

APPLE-YEAR

My last winter apple I ate today.
  Shapely and stout in their modelled skins
  Securely packed in my cellar bins
Two dozen good kinds of apple-spheres lay.

And today I went to my orchard trees
  And picked me the first-ripe yellow fruits
  That hung far out on the swinging shoots
In summer suns and the wonder-day breeze.

And thereby it was that the two years met
  Deep in the heart of the ripe July
  When the wheat was shocked and streams were
      dry;
And weather of winter stayed with me yet.

For I planted these orchard trees myself
  On hillside slopes that belong to me
  Where visions are wide and winds are free
That all the round year might come to my shelf.

And there on my shelves the white winter through
  Pippin and Newtown, Rambo and Spy,

Greening and Swaar and Spitzenburg lie
With memories tense of sun and the dew.

They bring the great fields and the fence-rows here,
The ground-bird's nest and the cow-bell's stroke
The tent-worm's web and the night-fire's smoke
And smell of the smartweed through all the year.

They bring me the days when the ground was turned,
When the trees were pruned and tilled and sprayed,
When the sprouts were cut and grafts were made,
When fields were cleaned and the brush-wood piles burned.

And then the full days of the ripe months call
For Jefferis, Dyer and Early Joe
Chenango, Mother, Sweet Bough and Snow
That hold the pith of high summer and fall.

All a-sprightly and tart the crisp flesh breaks
And the juices run cordial and fine
Where the odors and acids combine
And lie in the cells till essence awakes.

I taste of the wilds and the blowing rain
And I taste of the frost and the skies;

Condensed they lie in the apple guise
And then escape and restore me again.

So every day all the old years end
And so every day they begin;
So every day the winds come in
And so every day the twelve-months blend.

PENTHORUM

Ditch-crop, mute ditch-crop, stolid weed of the swale
I pause at the roadside to read me your tale.

I passed by this way in the lush of the spring
When bluebirds and robins were free on the wing,
When cowslips were bursting, and fresh spears of grass
Were mirrored through pondlets as deep as a glass,
When tadpoles were hatching, and roadsides were clean
With freshness of showers and riot of green,
But there though I lingered by furrow and trail
Discovered you not in the grass or the swale.

But later I come when deep ditches are dry
When tadpoles are vanished and dead grasses lie,
And here you are growing in dust and in heat
Unseen and unsought, yet a spawn of the street;
And you challenge my mood in resistless avail
Till I sit on the bank while you tell me your tale.

No mystery I hold, no secrets embrace
Except that I thrive in my own time and place;
There are broods of September, blossoms of May,
But I am the weed of the dead summer day;
I express stale ditches, the humble, the plain,
Give eyes to the wallow, the mud, and the stain;
Each range has its spirit and mine is the swale,—
The quick they may find me: and this is my tale.

PRAYER

How sweet the world at sunrise was
How fresh the breezes lay
How joyously the song-birds prayed
To herald in my day!

HERMIT THRUSH

Miles away are street and town,
The sun is down,
In deep cloisters of the wood
Moist airs faintly understood
Settle in the chaplets of the hill,
The leaves are still,
The heart beats loud
Amongst the crowd
Of mossy monitors,—
When clear a-down the corridors
Nor near or far
Drops a flute-note from a star—
Hush!
It is the thrush!

YELLOW-BIRD

YELLOW-BIRD and yellow-bird, you and I
Were friends and good friends in the days gone by—
We teetered away so high up and high
Upward and downward out under the sky.
  Ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee, ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee
  The meadows and meadows for you and for me.

Often and oft in the blue summer day
Long have I lain on the wagons of hay
And followed you bounding 'way and away
Till my soul and soul no longer could stay.
  Ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee, ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee
  The sky and the sky is unhampered and free.

Slowly and slow in the midsummer's rest
In sun of the east and heats of the west
I've tiptoed away in wonder-bound quest
To your sky-tinged eggs and thistle-down nest.
  Ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee, ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee
  There are none so ready and ready as we.

Copse-land and garden in winter and late
I sight you in crews of gray-brown and slate—

And May-month and June in prouder estate
All golden and jet with a gray-brown mate.
  Ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee, ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee
  I wonder and wonder what kith you may be.

Days-end and days-end and closing of gloam
Stilled heights of far sky and clouds white as foam
I lie on my back and under the dome
You twinkle your wings and drop away home.
  Ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee, ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee
  The night and the night and we ever are three.

Yellow-bird and yellow-bird, you and I
Still are friends and friends as the days go by
And away we gallop so high and high
From tree-top to tree-top under the sky.
  Ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee, ka-chèe-ka-ka-kee
  I fly and I fly to the hills and the sea.

HORIZON

Lift me out of my laboring day
Lift me up to the blue and away
And let me discover my own horizon line,—
Then drop me back to my work and play
And the far ends of the world in my day shall shine.

WISHFUL TRAVELLER

I SAILED upon the ocean waste
Full many days and more
And found at length my footsteps placed
Upon a rippled shore;
I asked not what the place might be
Nor who its people were
But was content if I might see
As a wishful traveller.
Full many days I bided there
The stranger scenes among
Nor found acquaintance anywhere
Or one familiar tongue;
I learned their ways as day by day
I saw them come and go,
A goodly folk and calm were they
With youthful overflow.

I know not where that landing was
I know not who those people were;
I moved among them there because
I was a wishful traveller.

THE GREAT HIGH-ROADS

I WENT one day by the woodland shore
  And I went one day on the lea,
I went one day in the tempest's pour
  And I went one day by the sea.

I went one day on the mountain height
  And I went in the valleys good,
I went one time in the headlong night
  And I went one time in the wood.

And I went one day on the rising road
  And walked with the upward sun,
And I went one day with a toilsome load
  And walked till the day was done.

And everywhere that I have gone
  Some travelling soul has been
And walked with me in the day and dawn
  And the two strange souls were kin.

One comes out from a humble home
  And one comes out the lane,
One comes out from a gilded dome

And one comes back from Spain;
One comes out with a hopeful stride
And one comes out with pain,
One looks out to the free-scapes wide
And one looks out for gain.

And on they go down the tireless paths
That lead to the world's one end,
And on they go with their joys and wraths
And on till the pathways blend.

And one and two as I pass on
Turn in to my forward way
And walk a space, and then anon
Turn off to the goalless day.

In stranger lands beyond the sea
With a speech I could not know
Some kindred soul has walked with me
Where the tireless pathways go;
High on tops of the rounding downs
And shores of the singing bays
Far in streets of the talking towns
We have walked our speechless ways.

And these are the ceaseless kindred souls
That I meet on life's highway,—
We meet and touch and they reach their goals
And I bid them all Good-Day,

And on I go to my sun-down tours
  And on to the rock-ledge kills,
And on I go to the sleeping moors
  And on to the wind-voiced hills;

And on I go to the palm-hut isles
  That rise in the southward seas,
And on I go to the snow-long miles
  And on till the wood-lakes freeze;
And on I go to the west and east
  And on to the south and north,
And on I go with the waif and priest
  And go with my road-mates forth.

All my path-mates go where they are set
  And I never see them more,
But it is enough that we have met
  Afoot on the earth-round shore.

And I dream the dreams of the age-long strife
  As I walk by men's abodes
And I spin them all on the looms of life
  Away on the world's high-roads.

ONE

Over the prairies boundlessly
As if 'twere over the sea
Roll of the sward unendingly
Ripe sun where the billows be,

Wind of grass and of popple-leaves
The gold of the compass-blow
Windmill vane by the clustered eaves
Raw weeds in the coulee-flow,
Standing corn for every one
The woodlots housèd and square
The rivers warm that broadly run
And farm-lands stoutly aware,
The far right roads and single sky
Fences that scant'ly divide
The common lot when traders buy
And hail of the harvest-tide,—

Over the prairies' long commands
To every house we see
Over the earth's great level lands
My brothers and I go free.

MARVEL

Ah, the wonders I have seen
At dawn and sunset and between!

The ocean beach on wild midnights
Deep steaming swamps and northern bights
The cirrhus clouds in high moonlights
The magic calm of tropic seas
The nameless sails at distant quays
The long long walks on lonely strands
Dead vacantness of desert lands
The constellations in new skies
The rounding landscape's million dyes
The fling of frost on country side
The burning stacks on prairies wide
Surpassing peace of autumn leaves
Ten thousand stooks of harvest sheaves
The ruddy camp-fire's holy zest
Howbe the catbird builds its nest
And how the palm-tree rears its crest
The sanctity of falling snow
The lull before the thunder-blow
The sacred naves of forests old
Strange rivers bearing freights untold

Serenity of mountain peaks
The youthful worlds in rolling creeks
The glacier gleams on headlands far
Deep chambered caves and calcic spar
The iceberg's crystal citadels
And all the people in the towns
In all the sleeping virgin towns
And all the partings and farewells,—
Oh the spaces and the sweep
Of the zenith and the deep!

Ah, the marvels I have seen
At gloam and sunrise and between!

DESERT

Gray and dun is the desert
Outstretching God only knows where,
Burning tense and fierce like a brazier
And dead as the bodiless air;
Worn and ag'd is the silence
That broodeth on snags clipt and sere,
The wind is its shifting handmaiden
That drifteth the undertone here;
Sharp and hard are the shadows
That lie beneath carcass and stone
Where harbor the snake and the lizard
That crawl to their caverns alone;
High and far are the colors
Gold sands to the summits gray-blue
Scarf-face and land-sweeps in their pigments
A-spread in the wastages through;
Grim and gaunt are the titans
Rock-forms and dead stocks on the sands
Great ghosts of the stark arid spaces
That beckon with motionless hands;
Clear and clean are the night-hours
Stilled star-lamps that gleam and are bold,

Dark shapes on the looming horizons
Barbaric and simple and old.

And God, He loveth the desert!—
The masses that are steadfast and free
And winds that come over the margins
Are as winds that come over the sea—
Over the voids and the forelands
Stript down to their bare verities:
The keen ultimate ranges are His.

SPARE ME ONE SWAMP

Ho! ye ditchers, ye drainers, go ye slow
Till I walk once more where the slough-creeks go,
And steal to the place where bladderworts grow
  Softly out there on oozy old edges of swales.

Just wait till I dash through the rim of trees
And the rank raw weeds and beyond the breeze,
To lily-quags reach, then half to my knees
  Plunge and plow the black puddles where the
    marsh-stench hales.

Hold! preserve one spot where no furrow turns
Where no garbage rots and no smoke-stack burns
And no sign-board gapes, where no tramp sojourns
  When hounded and outcast from the primp city
    pales.

Spare me yet one swamp where the marsh-hen
    breeds
One deep old morass where the mink-brood feeds,
One sweep of great bog where the cat-tail seeds
  Are shorn and snatched from their heads by the
    winter gales.

Reserve me one mire where the mud gives birth
Of things that guard and strike, where fen-vines
girth
And slime-pools steam, where the old savage earth
Contests me, defies me when I push 'long the
trails.

MT. TOM

We tramped the ripe October wood
'Twixt saplings thick and tall;
Long 'neath the shedding trees we stood
And watched the dead leaves fall;
And long we stayed, as lovers should,
To hear the blue-jay's call.

On smooth gray rocks the lichens spread—
We counted near a score;
The mosses yielded 'neath our tread
And still their capsules bore;
The aster tops were torn and dead
Where autumn winds were frore.

We sat upon the scuffling leaves
And pried the chestnut burs;
We traced the strands the wood-vine weaves
Where no intruder stirs;
We found the trails the wood receives
Like ancient foresters.

High nimbus clouds in strata lay
Along the arching sky

And scuds of rain aslant and gray
  Shot through the forest dry.—
In gentle peace the russet day
  Slipt on, we knew not why.

Then quick from top of a beetling crest
  And the world beneath us lay
With valleys wide to the east and west
  And the drifting smokes away.

Outspread were tints of the quilted farms
  And glint of the winding roads
And the river spread its silver arms
  By marts and the free abodes.

And far in the great horizon's sweep
  We counted the pointing spires
That stand where the shaded hamlets sleep
  High with hopes of men's desires.

The hanging hills in a broken line
  Stretched on to the sunward skies,
And to northward where the hills confine
  The Holyoke ranges rise.

Old mountains grew and were worn to plains
  And the rivers sank their beds,
Then the lavas thrust these ragged chains
  Where the ancient lowland spreads.

For the trap-squared rocks beneath our feet
Revealed the upheaval prime
When the mountain rose in stress and heat
In some far triassic time.

And thus have eons come and passed
And timeless cycles sped,
Old earth is scarred with changes vast
Of hills and oceans fled;
And what we know and love at last
Are ages gone and dead.

SUMMONS

HAVE you flung your arms and shouted
till the forests answered back,
Seen the footprints of the cougar or the
black-bear's shambling track?
Have you ridden mountain horses
as they follow up the trails,
Seen the court'sying water-ouzel and the
scuddling of the quails?
Then you come with me to Shasta
Where the racing waters flow,
Far behind the dome of Shasta
Where no tourists ever go,
In the forests deep at Shasta
Where the mighty fir-trees grow.

Have you smelled the pitch-knots burning
as they snapple in the breeze,
Have you seen the camp-smoke rising
till it billows in the trees?
Have you stretched full length and slumbered
on the needles for a bed
With the sun-flecks dancing on you
thro' the tree-tops overhead?

Then we'll go to find the rivers
Where they open to the sky
Wade the oozy turbid rivers
Where the water-bushes lie,
Feel the salmo in the rivers
As it rises to the fly.

Have you heard the boiling waters
when they bubble thro' the night,
Felt the touch of roaming night-winds
as they wander from the light?
Have you breathed the wind of fir-trees
in the silence of the wood
With the night-damps closing round you
where no human ever stood?
Then you join me in the darkness
Where the night is dense and deep,
Stretching silent in the darkness
When the wild beasts lie asleep
Hear a startle in the darkness
Where a panther makes a leap.

Have you heard the rain-drops tinkle
as they strike upon the leaves,
Have you felt the fore-winds freshen
when they whiffle in your sleeves?
Have you sat beside the river
when the rain begins to pour
So you know the fragrant music
that it makes along the shore?

Then we'll hasten to the weather
Be it rain or sun or cloud,
To the hazy purple weather
And the dust-deeps that enshroud,
To the free and open weather
When the winds are wild and loud.

Have you torn thro' thorny thickets,
walked a ten-mile at a stage,
Floated down the falling rivers
past the sedge and saxifrage?
Have you waited at the deer-licks
for the coming of the game?
Have you bivouacked in the forest
till you've clean forgot your name?
Then we'll off into the forests
Where the bubbling waters run,
Shout our challenge in the forests
At the rising of the sun,
Build our night-fires in the forests
When the careless day is done.

YONDER

I AM off into the far north country
Off beyond the last name on the map
Farther than the new prospected front re-
Gardless of the day or raw mishap.

I am going
Where the unknown winds are blowing
And the unnamed streams are flowing
Flowing where no yawl or lugger ever ran
I am going where the beasts have never smelt a man—
Out upon the earth where no foot has been before
Where all ways are ways of conquest and there is no atlased shore
To the earth that knows no cities, or ever heard of house or road
Of book or place or preaching or historic episode
Just to be for once together
With the unrecorded weather
And things that live because they live
Nor care why they are thus and so
Where there is no gain to give
And no trails to lead where I would go
Where a soul may search and wander
On the peaks and plains of Yonder

And make no note or record of the regions wonder-
miled
So the man who cometh after shall find them his
and undefiled;—
Glad to live before all the earth is charted
And the race becomes so soft and timid-hearted
That no man dare sleep one league from any other
Or relieve the turgid crowd by going out from one
another,
Glad that in some distance
Nature sets resistance
To the barter and the ravage and the plow
That some things are well beyond us everyhow—
Some reach beyond the timber and the mines
Some blank within the sea confines
Some silence where the soul upshrines
Somewheres no man can steal and plunder
As far and fresh as wind and thunder
And the caverns deep down under,
The untouched tops of mountains
The unpolluted fountains
In the farthest wildernesses
The virginal recesses
Wherefrom the race may draw its power
To stand complete within its hour.

I'm off beyond the borders beneath a homeless sky
Out into the largeness where the background spaces
lie.

MOTHER MUD

Ye roils of mud! On slag and road
On wallowed track and slipping yard
Down millioned years of slash and goad,
Ye be the earth's first honor-guard.

Clean scurf and rain, by heaven mixed
Forth-destined when the orb was flung—
Within the quick'ning sludge transfixed
Were all the songs the years have sung.

No sprout of earth, no winnowed soul
No singing sphere, no god of man
Except from out your brooding shoal
Had ever winged their master-span.

Flush sloughs of mud! In fragrant dawn
In leaping spring and garnered fall
I tribute bring to breed and brawn
Nor dare defile one mire withal.

Flow down ye rains to earth far-long
Rise up ye lands to wind and rift,

When ye be strong then all be strong—
Full-free of doubt and stain and shrift.

For from the sleech the strong ones come;
And ev'ry bird and hoof and bud
In godly part and sacred sum
Proclaim the kinship of the mud.

HANDS

Some hands go to the manicure
To primp and polish and shine
Some hands go to the velvet lure
And some to the jewel shrine;
But these are the hands that hold the plow
The self same hands as of old and now;—
They are the hands that court'sy and perk
But these are the hands that do the work.

Some hands hap on a hazard-green
And some with a shuffled pack
Some hands thrum on a tambourine
And some hang limpsy and lack;
But these are the hands that dig and drain
The self same hands that gather the grain;—
They are the hands that pleasure and shirk
But these are the hands that do the work.

Some hands spurn the rubble and clods
To clutch at the golden stairs
Some hands reach for the rainbow gods
On the pampered thoroughfares;

But these are the hands that wield the helve
The self same kind in the chosen Twelve;—
They are the hands that surfeit and irk
But these are the hands that do the work.

THE SIGNS OF LIFE

Ha, ye dead thing upon the ground
How few of ye I've ever found
And I have tramped it far and wide
By wood and wash and ripple-side!

And often have I wondered where
The bodies of the dead misfare,—
Of all the multitudes of those
The variegated life compose
Of field and sea and air and earth
Throughout the planet's spacious girth.

Some pass life's full allotted span;
On some there is the 'scapeless ban
That takes them early to the pit—
Where be the graves of the unfit?

But soon or late the day is sped
And strong and weak alike are dead,
They meet the summons where they are
And ev'ry death is singular;
And yet these millions pass unseen
And leave scant trace to intervene.

The gaps fill in; the earth is rife
With energy that mastereth;—
The upward signs of birth and life
Are greater than the signs of death.

FARMER

I HOE and I plow
I plow and I hoe
And the wind drives over the main.

I mow and I plant
I plant and I mow
While the sun burns hot on the plain.

I sow and I reap
I reap and I sow
And I gather the wind with the grain.

I go and I come
I come and I go
In the calm and the storm and the rain.

FARMER'S CHALLENGE

Blow ye winds and lay on ye storms
And come ye pests in rabble swarms
And fall ye blights in legion forms—
I am here: I surrender not
Nor yield my place one piece or jot;—
For these are my lands
And these are my hands
And I am bone of the folk that resistlessly stands.

The blood of old plowmen runs hard in my arm
Of axemen and yeomen and battlemen all
Who fought and who flinched not by marish or wall
Who met the bold day and chased ev'ry alarm;
My fatherkind sleep, but I hear the old call
And fight the hot battle by forge and by farm;—
For these are my lands
And these are my hands
And I am bone of the folk that resistlessly stands.

I PLOW

QUICK smell of the earth, I am come once more
To the feel of soil and the sky before
To tang of the ditch and whift of the bough
With stamp of my team and grip of my plow.

I am blowing again with wind and rain
  I am falling with frost and snow
Yearning once more with the fields that have lain
  Through the months of the drought and flow,—
You shall hear the clank of my plow and chain
  Where my hard-harnessed horses throw
And follow the welts that I rip in twain
  As I turn up the lands below.

Jangle and crunch in the far-windy morn
  Cut and grind through the singing sod
Stone and high-hummock and thistle and thorn
  Root and stubble and rolling clod
Puddles that break into furrows foreshorn
  Helm of the handles, plow-point's prod,—
With hale of great harvests my bouts are borne
  Ov'r the vasts of the glebes of God.

Mete to the mark are my furrows full-set
Hard with the muscle and marrow and sweat
Straightforth is the way and the fields are rife
High over the heights of the hills of life.

PLOW-BOY

Tramp, tramp,
Thrust the share along the row—
Tramp, tramp,
Feel the horses pull and go!
Ho, oho
The rain and snow
And winds a-blow!

Halt, halt,
Turn the corner, keep the hold—
Go, go,
Plunge the point into the mould!
Ho, oho
'Cross the ends, oh ye who know—
Call of fowl and flight of crow!

Tramp, tramp,
Keep the share straight to the row—
Tramp, tramp,
How the horses pull and go!
Ho, oho
Summers come and autumns flow—
How the grain will burst and grow!

HERE

WHERE I shall fall there let me lie,
From end to end the earth is mine
For kin with me are land and sky
And ev'ry spot is home benign.

YOUNG FARMER

He shall go out to the far green hills
And he shall go out on the mains
He shall go north 'long the rock-bound kills
And he shall go south on the plains.

He shall go out to the desert reach
Where the dead winds gather the sands,
He shall go on where the waters breach
Far down in their weltering lands.

He shall go forth in the winter's rage
And away in the tropic fire
And there he shall stand; nor fame nor wage
Shall defeat him of his desire.

For he shall build on the good stout earth
That he takes from the hand of God,
And grip his place with a free man's girth
And shall strike his fires from the clod.

No nature-doubts shall haunt him to fear,
Storm and calm shall he walk with her—

Together joined in the rolling year
Where elemental pulses stir.

Temples shall rise on the land he smites
Visions turn with his good plow-beam,
For steadfastly on through days and nights
There shall rest on his face the Dream.

JOHN

Come, John of the Roadside, stout John of the Farm
For long have ye labored and your good right arm
Still hath its cunning, and high harvests and goods
Have come from your orchards and grown from
your woods;
Ye've earned a fair respite and fitting abode
Out from the traffic and far back from the road,—
Go build ye a mansion with comforts polite
Away up on the crest of the grand great height.

Nay, long have I housed where the free road is
laid
And here is the place where men travel and trade;
Long out to the open and in to the mart
Old Jack with his wagon and Tom with his cart
And men far afoot and the children to school
And the summer's gray dust and winter's cold pool
And posies that blow in the grass of the spring
And hens strolling out and the bird on the wing
Have hallowed this roadside; and outward it leads
Unto all the round world and to all men's needs.

The dog trotting by would not know me or stop
The traveller's hail would not reach my high top
The thirsting road-team would not drink to its fill
And weeds of the roadside would shrink from my hill;
Long years have I followed the plow in its gird
My cattle all know me and come at my word
They know my gray coat when they see me come out
They wait at the bars when dim dusk is about,
And hard would they stare with their wondering eyes
Should I stride down the hill in lofty disguise.

No; here let me stay where my trees have grown big
With the road and the well and lilac-bush twig
And close on my soil where my house-gods may lie
And my heart keep green to the folk that pass by.

TILE DRAIN

FAR under the ground
As men pass by
Unseen and alone
I silently lie.

Under bottoms of springs
And under the pools,
'Neath slopes of long fields
And under old stools
Of bush and of brier,
'Neath roots of the grass
On hardlands and swale,
I straightforwardly pass.
I feel the cool earth
And slow trickling streams,
And roots of big trees
That pry in my seams;
And crawling things find
When pursued by alarms
A genial retreat
As they hide in my arms.
The soft summer showers

And long winter rains,
The springtime that floods
And the autumn that wanes,
The tempests that rend
With their sudden affright,
They disquiet me not
In the day or the night.
Far down to the bank
Of the streamlet I run
And carry my freight
To the drift and the sun;
And oft to my mouth
Do the yellow-birds come
And drink to their fill
When the stream is dumb.
The cattle I hear
As they move on the land,
And the burrowing folk
That build in the sand.
When the plow-team tramps
On the full crunching earth
I feel the hard thrusts
Of the first harvest birth;
But the plowman thinks not
That I lie down below
And tireless prepare
For the harvests to grow.
And as seasons return
All the pastures above

Respond to a touch
That he knows not of.

Years in and years on
I rest in my bed
And draw down the rains
When the farmer is dead;
And nothing I care
That the people know not
Whether I am
Or where is my lot.
All secrets I hold
Of the dead and the live,
For they all come at last
To the soil where I strive.

Calm and content
I silently lie
And carry my work
As men pass by.

CHILD'S REALM

A LITTLE child sat on the sloping strand
Gazing at the flow and the free,
Thrusting its feet into the golden sand,
Playing with the waves and the sea.

I snatched a weed that was tossed on the flood
And unravelled its tangled skeins;
And I traced the course of the fertile blood
That lay deep in its meshèd veins;

I told how the stars are garnered in space,
How the moon on its course is rolled;
How the earth is hung in its ceaseless place
As it whirls in its orbit old.

The little child paused with its busy hands
And gazed for a moment at me,
Then it dropped again to its golden sands
And played with the waves and the sea.

COUNTRY SCHOOL

THERE certainly will come a day
As men become simple and wise
When schools will put their books away
Till they train the hands and the eyes;
Then the school from its heart will say
In love of the winds and the skies:

I teach
The earth and soil
To them that toil,
The hill and fen
To common men
That live just here;

The plants that grow,
The winds that blow,
The streams that run
In rain and sun
Throughout the year;

The shop and mart
The craft and art,

The men to-day
The part they play
In humble sphere;

And then I lead
Thro' wood and mead
By bench and rod
Out unto God
With love and cheer.
I teach!

COUNTRY CHURCH

In some great day
The country church
Will find its voice
And it will say:

I stand in the fields
Where the wide earth yields
Her bounties of fruit and of grain,
Where the furrows turn
Till the plowshares burn
As they come round and round again;
Where the workers pray
With their tools all day
In sunshine and shadow and rain.

And I bid them tell
Of the crops they sell
And speak of the work they have done;
I speed ev'ry man
In his hope and plan
And follow his day with the sun;
And grasses and trees

The birds and the bees
  I know and I feel ev'ry one.

And out of it all
As the seasons fall
  I build my great temple alway;
I point to the skies,
But my footstone lies
  In commonplace work of the day;
For I preach the worth
Of the native earth,—
  To love and to work is to pray.

UTILITY

In deepest wood
A flow'ret stood
'Neath unknown skies;
Its petals bright
Ne'er gave their light
To human eyes.

A wand'ring man
'Neath learning's ban
Espied the flower:
"Ah, little swain
Thy life were vain
Until this hour."

But nature knew
Of all that grew
No thing is vain:
The restless tease
Of busy bees
Had rendered gain.

As you and me,
So flower and bee
  Hath life to give;
Nor pride nor pelf
Each of itself
  Hath right to live.

GOODS

I SAT at midnight in the woods
  When the darks were far and deep,
When all my kin had housed their goods
  And had fallen dead asleep.

A whisper moved above my ears
  As if slender rain-drops fell,—
A feeling of a thousand years
  From the whence I could not tell.

A something stirs within those woods
  A spirit remote and fine,—
And all my kin may have their goods
  For the deep old glooms are mine.

SOWER AND SEER

Full patiently the sower walked on his acres deep and clean
And dropped his handfuls one by one for the harvest full and green,
Full punctually he tilled his lands and groomed his sleek-fed kine
And frugally at sunrise and eve he dressed his yard and vine;
When days were fair he thrust his plow and compelled his clicking drills
And when wilding storms were loosed and raw he sped his barn-snug mills;
And day by day the sun rose and set upon his circling hills.

Full forwardly the seer stood on the rim of circling hills
Where trees were bent on the jagged cliffs and eagles dropped their quills
With shimmering farm-lands far below and spires of roof-flecked vills;

Full eastwardly and westwardly all the sweeping
earth lay prone
And upwardly the fleecing clouds in a bondless
sunlight shone;—
All things beneath and all above were in webs of
vision spun
Till every part was as the whole and all the whole
was one.

The sower and the seer each
Down life's unending way
Held fast his single speech
And lived his sep'rate day.

For one man cast his seed
And sped the coupled hours,
He stored his treasured meed
And plucked his garden flow'rs.

And one man stood alone
Where all the world was his,
All things that men have known
And all that was and is.

Alack, all ye that sow
And alack, ye that see,
No longer shall ye go
All sep'rate and unfree:

For one shall make far quests,—
The other 'side him fare
And come back from the crests
With star-winds in his hair.

IT RAINED

"Heavy rains made the elaborate decorations present a bedraggled appearance."

A KING was crowned upon his throne,
But the great rains they knew it not
The winds went on their ways alone
Nor the stars ever saw the spot.

But glad the ready farm-lands were
When the gray whelming rain-floods fell
And all the incense and the myrrh
Lay in the magic of their spell.

Nor winds nor rains know fame or niche,
Nor pause to profit those who play
With fribbling gew-gaws of the rich
Or ape the pomps of yesterday.

The winds and rains hold endless days
Nor touched of flaunt or shibboleth,
The strong is he who walks their ways—
No pomp came out of Nazareth.

Old valors rise in silent grass
Upon the landsman's simple glebes

But gloried stones unheeded pass
To wastes of Baalbek and of Thebes.

Deep in the backgrounds they are set
These makers of the thrones and kings,
Old earth will give them forecast yet
And lift their Stubbled Years on wings.

The plowman walks his furrowed quest
With wind and rain from sea to sea—
What bears he there upon his breast?—
He bears the Seals of Destiny.

VESPER

THE sun has sunk to rest.
I am one day nearer to the West.

DAYBREAK

HAVE you risen at the daybreak
When the world is cool and free
And the dawn comes up triumphant
Like the freshness of the sea?

Have you felt the nature kinship
As you go in fields alone
When the first new light is breaking
And the world is all your own?

Have you heard the first bird calling
From the passing of the night
When the dew is on the grass-land
And the corn-tops feel the light?

Have you walked through fog-filled hollows
By dim pathways soft and damp
Ere the pasture-lying cattle
On their fields had broken camp?

Have you known the youthful laughter
Of the brook upon its bed

While the shadows of the darkness
On its scented pools are spread?

Have you seen the wild things feeding
In the sun-break and the shade
Living each his mode and habit
When there's none to make afraid?

Have you smelt the tonic fragrance
When the morning airs distil
And you spread your chest and breathe it
Till it sends your nerves athrill?

So the dawn is rousing
Rousing bird and bee,
Thro' the ages calling
Calling you and me;

Yet we still are sleeping
Sleeping with our ills,
While the world is waking
Waking on the hills;

Spending hours at midnights
Making mimic day,
Longing for amusement
Burning life away;

For we yet are children
Playing with our toys,

Grasping at the fire-lights
Humored by the noise.

But I think I see the future
In the distance where it lies
Like a vision of the morning
Stretching out beneath the skies;

Nor mankind will know its mission
Nor its doubts will be withdrawn
Nor the race will be perfected
Till it rises with the dawn.

HILL-PATHS

AWAY over the hills as the train speeds by
I trace the long paths that lead out to the sky.

With a staff in my hand and bared to the breeze
I will mount ev'ry path and mightily seize
The roots of the bushes and sharps of the rocks
And brush of the pines on their tempested stocks,
I will strike knee-deep through the hollows of mud
That pour on the hillsides their procreate flood,
Rise over high meadows where eagles swing free
And vision runs outward on rivers and sea,
Pass stones of old camp-cairns with embers and
cinds
And bunches of blossoms all wild with the winds.

I will follow them out to their tenuous heights
Till clouds sink away 'neath the limitless lights
For long have I wondered what scenes I shall find
When houses and valleys are all left behind
And downward I look on the world and its bond
While I tramp to the hills that lie still beyond.

From snows of the arctic to straight tropic sun
These paths of the mountains all upwardly run,—

Clean grooves of old tracks of the stones and the rains
That mark out the routes 'twixt the clouds and the plains;
And I never can see the ends or the bound
But I know that they lead to the whole world round
And ever I wait for the day and the time
When over their crests I shall ardently climb
And on the last summit shall perfectly hear
The space-drifted music that rolls round the sphere.

Yet ever and ever do the days speed by
And draw me away from my hills and the sky.

But time cometh on when my soul shall be freed
And far beyond limits of days I will lead—
A shape disengaged on this planet abide
As loose as the storms and as far as the tide
As free as a wave-beat and ripple of rills
An echo of wood-calls, a voice of the hills—
I will join the high winds that boundlessly roam
And walk the long paths on the hills of my home.

THE FARTHERMOST HILLS

Come over the plains to the hilltops high
Come over, come over and rest;
Stay not on the plains where soft zephyrs lie
But come to the heights where the clouds sweep by
And the world-round gales through the heavens fly—
Come over, come over and rest.

There's wonder-strong music where the storms sweep by
Where the forests are rent and the earth-woes cry,
There's a grand old song where things suffer and die
And the struggle is on 'twixt the earth and sky;
Escape your calm levels and on to the West,
Come out with your cares to the uttermost crest—
Come over, come over and rest.

MY PURPLE HILLS

FAR over the valley are purple hills
Soft asleep in a twilight of haze.
I think there are fountains and falling rills
And aisles a-dream in the forest ways;
I think there are birds with a song that thrills
And winds that roam in the quiet days.

But the space between has a deep morass
With tangles and bogs that I fear to pass;
There are quaking hollows and sinking sands
And white burning suns on the sterile lands;
There are bottomless streams with luckless shores
And hedges of briers on the log-piled floors;
Blind depths I must cross; and cliffs I must scale
That stand like walls in the dread intervale.

Yet I think that I see the falling rills
In the depths of the twilight bar,
And I listen to catch the song that thrills
Falling down from the aisles afar;—
I am journ'ying on to my purple hills,
And over the hills is a star.

BEACON

My friend upon the crooking road
  Saw never light upon the crest,
He tried to bear his weighted load
  By page and precept and behest.

Poor soul! He went but little spell
  At ev'ry turn an ending was,
The maxims and the mottoes fell
  And empty were the books and laws.

* * *

There was a light upon the hill
  It led me through the welter-way,
In all the darks I saw it still
  Its gleam upbore me in the gray.

And when the flame went out at last
  I knew its mem'ry in the dark,
And still it led me as I passed
  On-beck'ning by its fadeless spark.

OUT

Upon a twig a tiny gall
One day in early spring
A pinhole pierced the crusted wall
Whence life had taken wing.
I cut across the last-year globe
And found the cell inside
Whence hope had fled its hardened robe
For distance blue and wide.—
The wind was far that April day
By woods and freshet sounds
A bee flew by upon its way
From out its winter bounds.

NEW MOON

Twilight twilight of the west
Sky-lines fading into rest
Cloud-bars lying far and slight
Shadows sinking into night,—
O moon, ye moon, so faint and still
Hanging hanging as ye will
Low along the western sky
Far and far and yet so nigh
A finger's breadth within the sheen
And silent shoreless vasts between—
Thy aching heart long ages lost
And clear and calm as film of frost
Ye know no longer strain or stress
All passionless and passionless.

O moon, ye moon, ye day-old moon
That swims within the twilight swoon
So fragile fragile in the gleam
A thing unreal as in a dream,
How doth it seem so thin to be
So bodiless and utter free?
And dost thou know that thou art dead
Know that thou hast no fear or dread?

And dost thou take of time no heed
As termless eons onward speed?
And why and why may I not reach
Across the slender silent breach
Between us here
Since the way is clear?

An orbèd shape thou dost contain
A veilèd vacuous diaphane
Within the hollow of thy bowl—
Is it the shimmer of a soul?
What mystery
Hangs within thy pale intensity
Thy cold serenity
O twilight moon, crescent-lipped
  Phantom moon, ether-tipped
  Haunted moon, spirit-dipped!

O moon, ye moon, nor souls nor men
Know why or how or whence or when
Ye sprang from out the primal strain
Or when shall pass to naught again.

SPIRIT

'Twas far away
Near Hudson's Bay.

There a lone hut stood
By a whitened wood
With the door a-yawn
And the chimney gone,
And nobody knows
In that realm of snows
Who made it or why
In the years passed by
Nor his kind or race
In that friendless place,
Or were children born
On the shores forlorn
And whither they went
When their time was spent,
Or who came that way
On some rare great day
And gave to them word
Of news he had heard
On the long long track
To the North and back;

But yet have they left of their spirit there
And little brown twigs are thinly aware
Away on the trail of the voyageur
In the far-off land of the lonely fir.

It was far away
Toward Hudson's Bay.

REST

Gently comes the eventide,
Gently on the countryside
  Spreads the twilight peace;
Darkness gathers deep and wide
Deep and far and simplified
  With the day's release;
Close and sound the earthlings hide,—
I know calmly they abide
  In the night's surcease.

SKEIN

Ah sweet is the wind at the eventide
And sweet is the wind when the sun has died
And sweet is the wind when the hours subside
  And sweet is the sleep when the night comes on;

Ah fresh is the wind when the night is run
And fresh is the wind at the rising sun
And fresh is the wind when the hours are spun
  And fresh is the face when the light comes on;

Ah stout is the woof of the shuttling wind
And stout is the warp of the soul abscind
And stout is the skein of the life full-spinned
  And stout is the weft when the smite comes on.

SHE SANG

"The single singer with a melodious and untrilled strain is not much heard now. The best singing I hear is now and then out among the folk,—a simple direct song as plain and sweet as a bird's note."

She sang
She sang as the bird sings,
Her voice had taken wings;
It rang
Beyond the multitudes of things.

She sang at morn, at noon, at night,
She sang completely and forthright,
A clear and simple easy strain
That once you heard would come again.

I heard it echo down the wood
The thrush, the veery understood;
I caught it in the lily-bell
I heard it where the water fell;
I felt it on the slopes of grain
And in the wind before the rain.

She sang, she sang as the bird sings
The song of songs on stintless wings,

She sang the full and flexile music of the
heart,—
She had never heard of art.

I saw the color in the woods,
I smelled the odors in the hoods
Of bergamot and citronel;
The wind was in the orchard trees
The fields gave up their melodies,
And in the lanes I knew the spell
Of one who sings straightforthly well.

'CELLO

"My father's 'cello. . . . The Norwegian wood is used almost entirely for this instrument, . . . made in their own country and for their own use."

He drew the bow across the strings.
I saw the dream fall in his eyes
I saw the wizard mem'ries rise
I saw the distant listenings.

He drew the bow across the strings.
His fingers fell as one who brings
The dulcet of some old romance;
And through the wood the resonance
From cell to cell awoke again
And bore the ravish of the strain.

Once more he drew across the strings.
Once more he stopped as one who wakes
The tokens of old singing things
And of their reverie partakes.

He was one of nature's list'ners.
He heard the voices of the firs
The tinklet of the dropping rills

In distant Norway's cragged hills
Where grew the wood all clear and brent
That built the magic instrument;
And when he drew across the strings
He heard the swish of eagle's wings,
The mighty surge of waters beat
'Gainst holm and stack and mountain feet,
The winds that veer on heathered heights,
And cricket's crick on quiet nights.
He heard the tunes of masters' hands
That drew the bow across these strands
A hundred years in Hungary;
He heard the olden melody
Of children's laughs and mother's fears
Played on the strings of fateful years;
And sacred things he could not name
From cell and cell in numbers came.

He drew the bow across the strings,—
Then stopped and list as one who brings
Far treasures of old singing things.

PAUSE

Some sounds I hear at gray twilight—
I pause that I may hear them right.

I hear a wagon yonder-way
It has a sound like close of day;
Some person spoke something somewhere
It almost broke the hollow air;
Two leaves strike thinly on the bough
The leaves are flapping tunely now;
The wind sinks down with such caress
That I can hear its silentness;
There is a tinkle like a bell
I think it sounds the day farewell.

Some sounds I hear at soft twilight
And I can feel the answer quite
Along the marges of the night.

POET

Tell me, O Poet, where thou dost live
Show me the place whereon thou dost stand
Lead me to the crests that give
Those wondrous scenes thou dost command
And let my waiting soul enwreathe
The rarer airs that thou dost breathe
Upon thy diamond shore.

He took me by the hand
And led me to my own hearthstone
We paused upon the wonted floor
And silent stood alone—
Till all the space was over-pent
With a magic wonderment;
And I found the Poet's store
On the threshold of my door.

COVER

THE hens have gone to roost
For the tension of the day is loosed,
I see them in the trees
I know they are at ease.
The cattle stand waiting at the gate
A distant dog barks inanimate
The tree-tops rise in silhouettes
Beyond the silent rivulets
A barn door clinks for covered night
The smokes lie low and sounds are slight.

The rubid vibrant day has gone
The day that rose at pulsing dawn
And beat its strokes into my brain
In one actinic ceaseless strain.
The shades are drawn athwart the strokes
And the creatures and the folks
Are paused and still,
They do as they will;
Now they rest;
The alkahest
Comes with the dusking of the West,

And they pass on to other states
When space less fiercely palpitates;
They will recover from the tremor and the whet
Of the wave-beats of the ultra-violet.

STRENGTH

Lone I sit beside the ingle
With the rain upon the shingle
And the elements commingle
  In a weaving drifting song;

Well I hear the dead leaves scatter
And the ceaseless ceaseless shatter
Of the inundating patter
  In the hours both deep and long;

Now I feel the world's keen sorrow
And the gainless wish to borrow
Some surceasement for the morrow
  'Gainst the old pursuing wrong;

But the healing rains are sweeping
And the cleansing ground is sleeping—
So I give me to their keeping
  For I know the earth is strong.

THREE

THE chickadee, the closed gentian,
And the doubts I dare not mention:—

We three together were
One ashen autumn day.
I'd gone by cottager
A long and lonely way;
The clouds were low and chill
The scudding leaves whipped by
The winds were deadly shrill
No break was in the sky.
I sat disconsolate
My eyes were on the ground
With no power to frustrate
Or sadness to abate,
As if I had been drowned.
Then I heard the brave bird call
Merrily stoutly from the self-same air;
Then I saw the gentian small
Blooming still in the autumn bare.—
And I felt the wonder there
In the ground and everywhere
Rising slowly like a prayer.

HIM

I SAW the grimmy monument
On builded thoroughfare
Where pauselessly the people went
And no one seemed to care,
I thought that on the surfeit street
These things less prizèd are
Than far away in some retreat
With wind and cloud and star,
I thought that he who's ever great
Works out his plan alone
And not where men do congregate
On lanes of sculptured stone;
Then out upon some meadow-by
A cairn we'll pile to him
We'll pile it wide and pile it high
With ample arc and rim,
We'll pile it of the stones afield
From nearby brook and pent
And let its silence unconcealed
Stand forth his monument.

TWO

Burly dozy bumble-bee
Inch-high bumbling on this juiceless mould,
Some forty feet your circuit is
About this hemlock-tree;
Intent upon your business
Unmindful of the wind and me
Some wizardry I judge you hold:
What is your part and genesis?
Where did you get your cloth-of-gold?

Full hour have I watched you on this spot
Buzzing busily about this single tree
And yet you have seen it not—
You have not seen even me;
I know not what may be your design
And certainly you know not mine—
I doubt me whether you know thine;
Your world is paltry small—
By forty feet is your ambition bond:
I have seen the stars and all
(Of course I have not seen beyond).

NAUGHT

"Sound is the sensation produced on an organ of hearing. If there were no ears there would be no sounds."

THERE is no noise in nature,—
All its wild inflature
Is as silent as the dead.
What awful eons sped
Before some nerve of hearing
Caught the rhythm of the sphering
Of the wind in the cosmic energies
And knew that there is accent in the rolling
of the seas!
When the voices came to being
With the feeling and the seeing
Then the silent secret earth
Gave its message and its worth
And all the ears that came thereafter
Have heard the music and the laughter
Of its million falling streams
And have caught them in their dreams.

Oh the blankness of those stages
In the far and fearful ages

When a cycle and a cycle were a year
And there was no sense to hear!
Old earth was in the making
And 'twas hasteless for the waking.
Yet I know that in the spaces
Of the earth's unpeopled places
I still may stand upon the shores that are
voiceless but for me,—
For me the rush of tempests and the call
of Cybele.

And may there still be waiting
Some other sense translating
A world in which unknowingly we live
To which no nerve is sensitive?
Are not the secrecies forthbidden?
Shall the utter things be hidden
At the last
When the years are past?
Why should we be with faith endowed
What soul moves in the tree
What lies beyond the wraith of cloud
What lies beyond the sea?

ANCHORAGE

"In the Galaxy or Milky Way and other parts of the heavens are what appear to be holes or windows that open out to absolute night."

BENEATH the millioned Milky Way
In silent night and meteor-sway
I stand, an atom lost and lone
Upon the broadcast welkin thrown.
And yet out-through the Galaxy
And awful webs of nebulæ
They tell me there are openings
That lead beyond the ends of things.

And if there be the windows then
That open from the outmost ken
Out to arcana vast and far
Beyond the glint of any star
Into the wonder-deeps of black
From which no sign or hint comes back
To tell us of the void abyss
Of Chaos all creationless
Where leagues by billions drop and blend
And yet no nearer comes the end,—
Then may there be in some far realm

Another cosmos, and a whelm
Of myriad cohorts whirling hence
Beyond that last circumference?
And still beyond, what may be there
What mighty systems unaware?

And are there then no ends or bounds
No time, no death, but shoreless rounds?
No place but from some vast frontier
Some vaster place shall then appear?

And if there be no thing beyond, what is the Outer Dark?
Where is the boundless boundary, what is there in the stark?

Stand still my heart! And let me find
Some shelter-place for my small mind.

* * *

I know I stand upon my shore.
I know I look through open door.
I know that spaces stretch before.

Unto my solid earth I cling
And grip myself to ev'rything
That to my conquest I can bring;
I must be of the Fact aware

Then let my vision outward fare
Nor fear whatever may be there,—
As wide and free as windows are
That open to the spaces far
Beyond the glint of any star.

Much joy it is that we may be
Some part of plan so wonderly
And dream the dreams of mystery.

WHICH

A FEW quick years, some sense of range and gyve
Some retrospect, some look ahead,—
Is it the normal state to be alive
Or is it normal to be dead?

WEFT

The necessity is on me
And I run the leaping years
No essential thing shall shun me
Though the way be wet with tears
For the mills of earth have spun me
On the rolling hemispheres.

FELLOWSHIP

In eastern lands
Where Mithras taught his sacred bands
They bode the coming of the day;
And when the hours of night were run
They bowed themselves to earth to pray
And prostrate knelt before the Great God Sun.

In western lands
I outward look and walk my sands,
And I await the coming of the day;
I see the night dissolve away
And stars fade out and mountains rise
And baldric bars implant the skies;
I feel a thousand voices wake
And all great sounds and shapes of gods and men
their long-accustomed courses take:
But I humble not nor bend the knee
For I worship them not and they worship not me;
I stand forthright when the night is done
And raise my arm and hail my Great Brother, the
Sun.

BROTHERHOOD

Weather and wind and waning moon
Plain and hilltop under the sky
Ev'ning, morning and blazing noon,
Brother of all the world am I.
The pine-tree, linden and the maize
The insect, squirrel and the kine
All-natively they live their days—
As they live theirs, so I live mine.
I know not where, I know not what:—
Believing none and doubting none
Whatso befalls it counteth not,—
Nature and time and I are one.

The wild bird fashions its nest of straw,—
The bird abides by its time and law;
The forest stands by the night and day,
The flower blooms and it fades away;
The earth grows green and the earth grows brown,
Life rises up and then death comes down;
The life and soul of the things that be
It flows on and on unceasingly.

The wind blows out to the ageless sky,
And the placeless clouds go floating by;

The rain descends and the rivers flow,
The summers come and the winters go;
The dusk returns and the morning light,
And call of day and the voice of night;
The ages run to a silent sea,
Flowing and flowing eternally.

I am the bird in its nest of straw
And I abide by my time and law,
I am the tree standing night and day,
And I am the plant that fades away;
And men grow green and the men grow brown,
And life rises up and death drops down;
And men, and life, and the things that be
They flow on and on unceasingly.

I am the wind that blows to the sky,
And ageless cloud that goes floating by;
I am the rain and the river flow,
I am the seasons that come and go;
I am the dusk and the morning light,
The call of day and the voice of night;
And I pass out to the silent sea,
Flowing and flowing eternally.

I AM

I LIE on my back on the shingle shore
Subdued by the wind and the pebbly roar;
I see the white clouds in their domes of air
And the specks of birds that are floating there;
And the earth is small and the sky is large—
I forget the sense of my time and charge;
I am lost in awe of the Great Program—
Only this I know: I know that I am.

The wild earth it is swinging afree from its place
It is rolling adrift on the limitless space
It is sailing away past cerulean bars
It is passing the moon and the sun and the stars;—
And the wind and the wind it is following fast,
And the sunshine and shadow are scurrying past,
And white cloud-shafts are pointing with fingering streams
That are caught and are lost in the myths of my dreams.

Oh ferry me out to the bold deep sky,
Oh blow me away through the blue,—
I will snatch the years as they hasten by

And scatter their days as the dew:
For the years and years are but shapes profound
That are bred in the depths sublime,
And that ride and ride in their fruitless round
On the perishing wings of Time.

Oh carry me out where the starlights burn
Where the world-stuff billows and sweeps,—
I will grasp the orbs as they pass in turn
And fling them adrift on the deeps:
For the worlds and worlds may vanish as air,
And schemes of the universe fall,
Yet will I fly to some vast Otherwhere
And hold my domain Over All.

PROCESS

Blow down ye gales from your mountain heights
Roll out ye thunders from your gates ajar
Fall lightning's stroke and besom of blights
And the polar flashfire and shooting star,—
The world builds large on the bridge of nights
And the way is open and fresh and far!

I hear the sweep of the rolling looms
As the globe is hurled through the shuttle-jaw
Forth and back from its infinite dooms;
The whelming surge of the ocean's maw
Avalanche crash and the glacier-booms
River's rank wash and the yawning flaw
And earthquake blast and the crater fumes
The radium might of the crusted scraw
Of the earth, labor of countless blooms
The man-insect's work and polyp's law
Loss and decay in unheard-of tombs
And ever the sun and wind and thaw
And a million shores of birthing spumes
Are wrought on a world that's young and raw.

All in the making is; never done
Is the process of the old creation-plot—

Escape or delay there is for none;
All worths and shames are in the melting-pot
And the vivid stuff of life is run
In shapes protean and through moulds white-hot.

Blow down ye gales from your mountain heights
And let me drive on your breeding flights!

WRECK

In the field I saw as the train went by
The wreck of a carriage tattered and dry;
The winds had found it, and the lush weeds ran
Under and over the ruins of man.

With labor 'twas made by a hundred hands
With stuff assembled from a hundred lands
And 'twas sent with hope down a hundred sands;
But the mishap came and its work was done
And 'twas given back to the earth and sun
And stout nature took it as nature does
When man gives up, and whatever it was
Will never again foregatherèd be
Into fabric or fold or filigree,
But sometime somewhere each atom appear
As blush of a bloom or a gossamere
Or ion of signs in brain of a seer.

To destroy, to rebuild: the rounds maintain
In the wear and tear and the sun and rain
And hap or mishap it accounteth not
For all cometh back to the common lot

And ev'ry wreck since the morning of time
Hath taken its place in the plan sublime.
Nothing is lost; so the builder weeds ran
Over and under the fond works of man.

DECEMBER

It is now the high December.
The last betokened ember
Of the striving vivid year
That survived the brown November
Lies dead and painless here
Lies dead and pinched and sere;
And the fruits of proud September
Are hanging hanging here
They are hanging thin and sere;
And the masks of ward and rober
That bedecked the dyed October
They have found their finish here
They are lying crisped and sere
They are drifting bleached and blear.

It was in a far December
As distinctly I remember
Of a youthful doubtful year
That I sat in whitened fear
Of the death-end of the year;

For in forests gray and sober
I had mourned the red October
I had grieved for forests dry and drear;
And the crows and chickadees
And the wind-gusts in the trees
Made my sorrow sharp and clear,
And the leaves keen-edged and sere
Rasped an anguish in my ear
Of the dead and absent year.

But oh! the winds of great December
Since the dumb days I remember
Have blown me wholeness of the year
They have brought their tokens here,
And the proudness of September
Lays its best expression here;
And the silence seemeth good,
And the bareness of the wood
Is the bareness of the truth,
And age and youth
Do pause awhile and rest
At the glory of the East and the honor of
the West;
And the year is never wanting
And the way is never vain
And the creatures go undaunting
In the windrift and the rain.

Blow ye snows of old December
Drifting drifting down
Blow ye leaves of hale November
Drifting sere and brown,
All the years that I remember
With the snow come down.

THE WOE-WINGED BIRDS

THERE is a road that I have walked in many a
long and hopeful year
It leads through dingled garden-spots and blossomy
woodlands ripe with cheer;
And yet upon this hopeful road lives a brood of
black and fearsome birds
That settle down athwart my path in dread and
desolate woe-winged herds
And all the haunting fears that their swarm fore-
bodes I dare not put in words.

I see not what their droves presage or what omens
dark their crews portend
What augury of pain and loss, or what deep despair
I must forefend,—
And while I fear I journey on and the dismal ghouls
take leisure flight
Circling through the heavens wide and farther down
my hopeful road alight:
I have never overtaken them and know not why I
should have fright.

THUNDER-CALL

I HEARD the thunder roll last night
The thunder warm and wet;
It was the first great voice of spring
And winter suns are set.

I grieve to have the winter go
The winter old and gray,
Yet joy to have the springtime come
And bring my youth this way.

Again will changeful Aprils pass
The Aprils young and fain,
Of drifting flocks of honking geese
And wifts of big-dropped rain.

I bound again from open door
When April thunders roll
When soft winds blow from out the south
And low clouds shift and shoal;
I romp away to purpling woods
To misty liquid skies
The snow-free turf beneath my feet
The big world in my eyes.

I find the ferns and matted moss
That slept beneath the snows
And walk the logs that silent lay
Since autumn's waning close;
I search for dens of coon and fox
Old hawk's nests in the trees,
And start at ev'ry nimble sound
That meets me in the breeze.

I follow up the swelling creek
And stop the sticks that ride,
I halt at ev'ry greening shoot
And push the earth aside;
I wonder wonder as I roam
What riddles might be told
How all the many hiding things
Have passed the winter old.

Again I feel the tingling pulse
When bluebird's curling rote
Drops here and there from out the sky
An unembodied note;
I track the sparrows in the fields
Through brush and grasses fawn,
I hear the robins in the trees—
Few seen yet on my lawn.

They call me out and lead me on—
These thunders of the spring,

Beyond all plains and hills I know
  Their wander-challenge fling;
Old outposts fade and pass away
  In flux of great desires,
And on the marge of many woods
  I build my camping fires.

I wait to drive the plow afield
  And rip the furrows free
And breathe the fragrance quick and full
  Where soils and solvents be;
I long to fling the seeding oats
  And hear them strike the earth
And feel that I shall help the year
  To yield its harvest-worth.

And all the train of birds and rains
  As fresh and new appears
As when the thunder first I heard
  'Fore fifty flowing years;
And still I tramp the earth-brown farms
  I splash the breaking rills
And watch the slanting rainstorms drift
  Across the weathered hills.

I heard the thunder roll last night
  The thunder soft and low,—
The changing years are moving on
  The ceaseless waters flow.

I grieve to have the seasons fly
  The seasons loved and long,
Yet joy in ev'ry day that comes
  To seize its message strong.

Again the changeful Aprils pass
  The Aprils good and young
That pledge me from my housen-hold
  To earth from which I sprung.

DISCOVERY

I WENT into the starlit night, I sat me by the way,
A silence overtook me there, a silence soft and gray;
I roamed into the forest depths, I wandered far and far,
The silence followed where I went, like silence of the star.
I toiled unto the mountain tops, I saw the range on range,
The silence lay superbly there, resisting time and change;
I went upon the rivers long that lay by north and west,
The silence rested on the flood as on the mountain crest.
I sailed upon the circled seas ten thousand miles and more,
The silence cast its spell thereon and in the tempest roar;
I walked the way of hoarded marts where trading millions be,
And felt the brooding silence there like silence of the sea.

I passed into the homes of men, by peoples manifold,
And heard forgotten silences of years and days untold;
I went into my questioned heart, my heart of hopes and fears,—
I found the perfect silence there, the silence of the years.

HE

He stood outside with sun and star
He stood on tops with frost and spar
He stood stock staid where tempests are
A prophet of the things afar.

PROPHET

He came straight forth from his grim and grime
  Straight up from the sinks of hell
And told the throng with no mock or mime
  Of things that to him befell.

Like arrows shot the words caught and came
  And struck the heart to its core
Crude thunder-shafts from a neif and name
  That could hide its self no more.

Half hour his hot bolts flew stript and straight
  We were dazed with missiles sent—
Then out he strode from our ground and gate
  And we know not where he went.

BOTH

A PRIEST with a book
And a holy look
Sought well for the light
For the sacred light
  And I greeted him there as a brother;
A man by the brook
Where the bloom-bells shook
Sought well for the light
The same sacred light,—
  But the two were astrange to each other.

MAJESTY

"Sometimes her whole being seemed to become petrified in a silent suspense more thrilling than any action—as if her imagination were suddenly enthralled by the tumult and awe of its own vast perceptions."—*William Winter*, of *Charlotte Cushman*.

No voice was there,
Nor speech or gesture could declare
The majesty she felt;
When moments great and wonderings
And visions of transcendent things
Are in the being dwelt,
Grandly we stand
The verities are spanned
For the soul cannot express
Its authority and stress,—
The greatest speech is silentness.

And now I know why mountain peak
And silent sea supremely speak.

OTHERWHERE

TIME presses on with its burd'ning care
The years are hard-lad'n with gales,
But now I dream to the Otherwhere
And rest in its margeless vales.

No more I search in the distant lands
For the peace my soul to free,
I sit me down on the nearest strands
And my peace comes down to me.

Content I stand while the shifting year
Brings me home its golden freight,
For the Otherwheres all meet me here
And my stars unhasting wait.

The Otherwhere is the hills and isles
Slow passing me one by one;
Together joined they will tell the miles
When the race of life is done.

New islands come at each breaking morn
And higher their white domes rise,

Clearer the heights where my dreams are born
  The tops are piercing the skies.

I see the scars in the furrowed sides
  I note the wrack on the seas,
But I set my ship on rising tides
  For life is other than these.

I would not 'scape the furrows and seams
  That are plowed by rains and tears,
The mead of life is the brooding dreams
  Spun in the web of the years.

And when the last day complete shall ope
  I will gather my dreams to me,
And setting my ship to th' Isle of Hope
  Sail out on the somnolent sea.

JOURNEY

It is a journey deep and free
That I have entered on,
It stretches from the Morning Sea
To vasts of Even Sun.

At first I gazed in wonder out
Where sounds and colors blent
Attracted by the faery rout
Unknowing that I went.

Then stretched a plain all warm and long
With sights and pleasures spread—
I trooped it on in play and song
Uncaring where it led.

Every beast and bird I stopped
And asked who he might be,
Every flow'r and fruit that dropped
A question was to me.

And then I learned their names and scars
And traced them to their homes,
And oft at night then watched the stars
Within their awful domes.

Till all the wilds and rains that fell
They tied the world to me
And wove therein a magic spell
Of slender mystery.

I climbed the sides of star-blown heights
Where rolling rivers ran,
I stopped where wood-gods made their rites,
I roamed the fields with Pan.

And now upon my table-lands
Of mountains great and high
From orb to orb my sky out-stands
And cosmic sundowns lie.

Yet 'side with me upon the way
Are friends of th' olden-trip—
The beasts and birds, the winds at play,
In great companionship.

I wonder still as when a child
And still a dreamer be,
And far adown the journey aisled
Some margent vision see.

And if so be the dizzy peaks
No longer rise before
Then will the simple sleepful creeks
Sustain me more and more.

BACK

Delivered at last!
The fetters are cast
And the gates are outpassed.

Now back I go to the old-time lure
Back where I know that my footing is sure
Back to my swamps and my running brooks
Back to my woods and the nowhere nooks
That I knew long years ere I knew the books.

Out to my backgrounds, and to stand on the earth
Where time is at full, nor surfeit or dearth
Is part of the reckoning; always nature is whole,
The wind is the wind and the sun is the sun
Nor farther than this doth any man run
With his grasp or control;

To be free, not of care
Or of labor or share,
But to look on the world with eyes of one's own
And to think a clear thought detached and alone
And to say as one thinks it when the thought is
full grown
Or to hold it in treasure unsaid and unknown;—

Then to the fields for a hint and for clue to the
night
The old when 'tis living hath leaven and might
For the bushes are real and the fishes are right.

THE LITTLE SHIPS AND THE BIG SHIPS

The little ships in the harbor sit
The spotless sails are in zephyrs lit;
Bob and dance
Nod and prance,
They court'sy and nip
On the racing rip;
The little ships complaisantly flit
Where shoreless weeds on the surface skit.

The little ships to the ocean sail,
Salute and rock by the shore-line trail;
But they shelter seek when daylights fail
And drive on rocks in the hounding gale.

The giant ships in the harbor sleep
The placid hulls feel no shore-winds sweep;
Stanch and straight
Calm and state,
Unheeding they go
On the rolling flow;
The giant ships reach the currents deep
Where the grounding streams their silence keep.

The giant ships to the ocean's roar
Sail out and out with the wilds before
Nor turn them back when the tempests soar
For their stems are set to th' other shore.

FIVE

I SEE and hear and smell, I feel and taste,
I make my way with seemly haste
To pick from out the cosmic waste
  Some odds of things that I may know.

With staff and arc, by scale and balance fine,
With mark and symbol and with line
I measure all and call it mine
  And say that it is thus and so.

And yet and yet some simple daily flower,
The essence of the passing hour,
The Whence wherefrom I draw my power,
  The reasons why the forests grow,

What all the seeming part and content is
Of this great nature's mysteries,
The springs of life, the destinies,
  Remain unmeasured as I go.

And the Sacred Five, I shall lay them by
And dream for reasons as I lie;
I have no measures to apply—
  All things continuously flow.

HIVE

The building bees are humming
About the angled comb
And yellow bees are coming
With treasure laden home,
And other bees are going
To orchard and to bloom
To fetch new sweetness flowing
For ev'ry honeyed room;
Ten thousand blooms are vying
Wherever they may roam—
In hurst or fallow flying
The journey leadeth home.

NAY

"And finally we have come to the last days, when mankind will be governed by science."

NAY! There is no finality,
No dictum to obey;
Nature is one vast infinity,
And the mind a small timidity
Feeling the way.

We make the quest
The day is gone
We do our best
To found our action firm thereon,
And this is well.
The magic spell
Of high discovery,
The emprise of the licensed mind
That leaves tradition far behind
For one more fact secure to find
And one more fortress to unbond—
This is indeed great mastery.
But other reaches stretch beyond:
And at the last and at the last

When the early quest is past
And the mind is fuller grown
We shall project the vast unknown
Direct from prospects of the soul
From the free outreaching soul,
Intuitive the truth make whole.

When the last proud fact is said
And the knowledge hath been read
And the sum of science heard
Shall the poet say the word
The last great word,—
He the last to strike the stringèd lyre
The last to lift the pharos-fire.

THE ROUNDS

YESTERDAY
We rushed away
From Verilese to Leth,
Along the way
The journey lay
Hard by the balds of Geth.

We learn and say
The argument
Of tome resplent
We hear the voices pray
To courage us for death;
And yet alway
Doth the circuit lay
From Verilese to Leth,
Yet day by day
Do we take our way
By the barèd balds of Geth.

Swift and far the journey is
Beyond our soft philosophies
Beyond the sooth the sayer saith

Beyond the in-man's ease
Down to the swoons of death;
We tread the mills of Verilese
And run the toils of Geth
We drop the world's remembered keys
Amidst the moils of Leth.

FAITH AND TRUST

Two workmen true as I passed by
Announced what things beyond us lie,—
Two views that never can agree
Yet each one knew just what will be.
Of present days they were not sure
But each man's future was secure,
For faith had set them both to know
Precisely how our destins flow.

But only this and this I know,—
That I am here and then I go.
I pass my work with hope and zest
And live my time as it seems best;
I live it full and drain it deep,—
'Tis well to live, 'tis vain to weep.
If there be things I cannot tell
The more I trust that all is well.
I take the cheer from daily lot
And for the rest I vex me not,
For what there is beyond the sod
I leave it all to Time and God.

RESURRECTION

I DREAMED I dwelt beyond Mars,
I dreamed that I saw new stars,
I dreamed that the holy bars
Of my earthly avatars
  Were loosed from me forever;
And I dropped them one by one
Down the lambents of the sun
And I watched them as they spun
Where the planes of Chaos run
  Like flowers dropped on a river;
And I felt a pang of dread
For a moment as they sped,—
But I saw that overhead
Greater lustres were aspread
  Like rainbows brimming over.

THIS GREENWOOD TREE

UNDER this greenwood tree
The air is sweet and the wind is free
The sun burns tenderly
And the grass is green as it used to be.

How dear the old familiar places are!
I pass through them unaware—
The twilight hills are there
The evening star
The spaces vast between
But not so vast as they were then
The paths that lead to everywhere
The churchyard on the green
Where the hollies bud again
The oak-top strong and wide
The brook that falls through field and fen
The garden close beside,
And the house wherein I died.

It was under this greenwood tree
They placed what they knew of me
And they said their whispered requiems
Beneath these pleasant leafy stems

(How wonderful these leafy stems!)
Here all the years are narratived
Of the olden life that once I lived.

I loved life;
I loved the body that I bore
And when the time was full and rife
To leave it evermore—
  Those feet of the ready-travelled year
  The fingers that had brought the out-things near
  The eyes that knew the circled atmosphere—
I could not quite forget,—
Ah God! it were my one regret.

And now they come as then they came
A multitude of man and child
New of visage and of name
And by new vistas reconciled;
And new requiems will be said
When the crispèd leaves are shed
And they all likewise will be dead.
But now when shades are long and winds are nigh
By noon and night with vacant eye
They see me not and pass me by;
They wait till all the dead are caravanned,—
Dear things! they cannot understand.

MY GREAT OAK TREE

In a far foreign land there is a great oak tree
And I never can tell what it meaneth to me.

Thither I went in the days long ago
And sat in its shade when the sun was low;
A sadness deep had then carried me down
Where the life-cheer ebbs and the soul-fires drown;
Then the great strong arms and whispering leaves
Bestowed me the faiths of their age-long eves
Till the day-bred fears were winnowed apart
And the peace of the place fell to my heart.

And thrice away since then far over the sea
Have I journeyed alone to my old oak tree
And silently sat in its brotherly shade
And I felt no longer alone and afraid;
I was filled with strength of its brawny-ribbed bole
And the leaves slow-whispered their peace in my soul.

If never again I travel the sea
Nor feel once more the still message to me,
Glad will I call where my haven may be
Farewell and farewell to my great oak tree.

MY BROKEN TREE

Over my cliff is a maple tree
That always delights my heart to see.

In some stormy day its smooth bole fell
And now lies prone where it started well.

Its trunk is scarred, and with branchlets weak
That struggle still to the light they seek.

But straight to the blue its new limbs rise
And spread their leaves to the rains and skies.

One would not know from the verdant crown
That winds had beaten the old trunk down.

Its neighbors stern in the forest grim
Stand stiff and strict and all churchly prim.

But its branches spread more wide than they
And fling their fruits to the winds away.

And panellings fine its bole will make
When the artist comes his part to take.

Over my cliff is a broken tree
That it always cheers my heart to see.

UNDERTONE

From morning till night and everywhere
My days are full of their effort and care;
Full of labors to drive and schemes to test,
Of work to finish and knowledge to wrest;
And the known result of this noise and strife
Is what men and the world all call my life,—
This is the meed of the work that I own
Outspread on my life as an overtone.

But ever there runs through the work I own
The all-silent stream of an undertone.
This stream is myself as my life I live
And out of it flows all the strength I give.
It's the tone of hills and calm of the plain
The smell of the soil and the touch of rain;
'Tis a careful thought of the calm sweet grass
An abiding joy in the birds that pass
In the mite that lives in the growing shoot
And the changing tints of the leaf and fruit;
'Tis the melting snows and the morning sun
And the soft gray days and the marshes dun;
'Tis appeal of frost and the fragile dew
Of the passing clouds and the depths of blue;—

Then a quiet heart that can give no sign
Of the sacred calms that are only mine,
Or the gentle sins that are part of me
As the silent twigs are part of the tree,
Or memories deep I cannot express
Any more than the tree in its wild'rness.

The peace of the winds is my undertone—
I move with the crowd, but I live alone.

ANNETTE

'Tis many years since we were born
'Tis many years since we were wed—
The winds have blown from night till morn
As they will blow when we are dead.

INDEX

Anchorage, 162.
Annette, 214.
Apple-Blow, 66.
Apple-Year, 71.
At Midnight, 54.
Away, 16.

Back, 194.
Beacon, 140.
Bell Buoy, 52.
Between, 45.
Big Ships and Little Ships, 196.
Birds, Woe-Winged, 179.
Both, 188.
Brotherhood, 168.

Campanula, 64.
Cascadin, 51.
'Cello, 150.
Child's Realm, 119.
Church, Country, 122.
Clover, White, 70.
Columbine, 60.
Cosmos, 4.
Country Church, 122.
Country School, 120.
Cover, 154.
Cybele, 2.

Daybreak, 133.
Day-Dust, 8.
Dead of Winter, 14.
December, 176.
Deeps, 56.
Desert, 88.
Discovery, 184.
Drain, Tile, 116.

Enough, 50.

Faith and Trust, 204.
Farmer, 106.
Farmer's Challenge, 107.
Farmer, The Young, 112.
Farthermost Hills, 138.
Fellowship, 167.
Five, 198.

Goods, 126.
Great High-Roads, The, 82.
Great Voice, 28.
Greenwood Tree, This, 206.

Hands, 102.
He, 186.
Here, 111.
Hermit Thrush, 76.
High-Roads, The Great, 82.
Hill-Paths, 136.
Hills, Farthermost, 138.
Hills, Purple, 139.
Him, 158.
Hive, 199.
Horizon, 80.

I Am, 17.
I Plow, 108.
It Rained, 130.

January, 13.
John, 114.
Journey, 192.

Leaf, Mighty, 68.
Life, Signs of, 104.
Little Ships and Big Ships, 196.

Majesty, 189.
Marvel, 86.
Midnight, At, 54.
Mighty Leaf, 68.
Miracle, 59.
Moon, New, 142.
Mother Mud, 100.
Mt. Tom, 92.
My Broken Tree, 210.
My Great Oak Tree, 208.
My Purple Hills, 138.

Naught, 160.
Nay, 200.
New Moon, 142.
Night-Rain, 6.
Night-Wind, 20.

One, 85.
Otherwhere, 190.
Out, 141.

Paths, Hill, 136.
Pause, 152.
Penthorum, 74.
Plow-Boy, 110.
Plow, I, 108.
Poet, 153.
Prayer, 76.
Process, 172.
Prophet, 187.
Purple Hills, 138.
Purple River, 35.

Rained, It, 130.
Rainy Day, 5.
Realm, Child's, 119.
Release, 3.
Requiem, 49.
Rest, 146.
Resurrection, 205.
Riches, 48.
River, Purple, 35.
Rivers, Vagrant, 38.
Rivulet, Spring, 41.
Roads, Great High-, 82.
Rounds, 202.

School, Country, 120.
Sea-Grave, 58.
Seer, and Sower, 127.
She Sang, 148.
Ships, The Little and Big, 196.
Signs of Life, 104.
Skein, 147.
Snow-Storm, 12.
Sower and Seer, 127.
Spare Me One Swamp, 90.
Spirit, 144.
Spring Rivulet, 41.
Star, 47.
Starlight, 46.
Strength, 156.
Summons, 95.
Swamp, Spare Me One, 90.
Symphony, 25.

There, 34.
This Greenwood Tree, 206.
Three, 157.
Thrush, Hermit, 76.
Thunder-Call, 180.
Tile Drain, 116.
Trade-Wind, 26.
Traveller, Wishful, 81.
Tree, My Broken, 210.
Tree, My Great Oak, 208.
Tree, This Greenwood, 206.
Tropic, 15.
Trust, and Faith, 204.
Two, 159.

Undertone, 212.
Upper Wind, 30.
Utility, 124.

Vagrant Rivers, 38.
Vesper, 130.

Weft, 166.
Which, 165.
White Clover, 70.
Wind and Weather, 1.
Wind Blows, 22.
Wind, Night, 20.
Wind, The, 17.
Wind, Trade, 26.
Wind, Upper, 30.
Winds of the Sea, Ye, 32.
Winter, 10.
Winter, Dead of, 14.
Wishful Traveller, 81.
Woe-Winged Birds, 179.
Wreck, 174.

Ye Winds of the Sea, 32.
Yellow-Bird, 78.
Yonder, 98.
Young Farmer, 112.

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